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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXVI, Issue No. 14

www.saipantribune.com THURSDAY JANUARY 21, 2016 www.facebook.com/saipantribune 75¢

Fire engulfs car, shipping container

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A car caught fire in front of Mount Carmel School in Chalan Kanoa while another fire broke out at a shipping container at the old dumpsite in Puerto Rico yesterday.

No one was reported injured in the two incidents, according to Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services spokesman Derek Gersonde.

DFEMS received a call about a vehicle on fire in front of Mount Car-

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DEREK GERSONDE
Thick, black smoke billows from the burning shipping container at the old dumpsite in Puerto Rico yesterday at noon. A worker cutting the container using an acetylene torch triggered the fire, according to arson investigators.

Public safety issues crop up during police chief appointment hearing

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Senators scrutinized the credentials and experience of acting Department of Public Safety commissioner Robert Guerrero during a hearing yesterday on his appointment to the department's top post.

Guerrero

After hearing a chorus of support from law enforcement officials for Guerrero during a public comment period, senators of Committee on Executive Appointments & Government Investigations brought up concerns with public safety in the Com-

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IN ONGOING TRIAL OF OGUMORO

Prosecution rests after calling FBI special agent, 4 other witnesses

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

After calling Federal Bureau of Investigation special agent Haejun Park to the stand as the government's fifth witness, the prosecution rested its case in the ongoing jury trial of former Department of Public Safety deputy commissioner Ambrosio T. Ogumoro.

Attorney Edward C. Arriola, counsel for Ogumoro, moved for judgment of acquittal, but Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman denied the motion.

Arriola said they are not sure if the defense will call any witness when the trial resumes today, Thursday.

Special prosecutor George L. Hasselback, counsel for the government, first called to the witness stand former Office of the Public Auditor investigator Juanette David-Atalig.

After David-Atalig, Hasselback then called police officers Juan Mendiola, Peter Camacho, Elias Saralu, and finally FBI special agent Park.

In the government's opening statements, Hasselback said the evi-

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Guam veterinarians Dr. Jennifer Landis and technician Bambi Leone have been assisting the Saipan Mayor's Office's spay and neuter program.
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The Supreme Court stepped into a boiling political dispute over immigration Tuesday.
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LIFE & STYLE
Oscar-winning actor Jamie Foxx has played super villains and antiheroes on screen.
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Local

Close to 200 join Day 1 of Kensington job fair

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Close to 200 local residents trooped to the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center yesterday to join the first day of Kensington Hotel Saipan's job fair, which ends today from 2pm to 6pm.

E-Land Group Human Resources and Customer Service director Ginger Choi said that more than 300 positions are needed to be filled in the culinary, food and beverage operations, sales and marketing, front office, recreations, finance, human resources, housekeeping, and engineering.

"This is our first job fair. Before we keep on looking through online and other various channels to hire workers for the hotel. Right now, it is person to person and talk to the applicants," added Choi.

She added that anyone could apply. "Since we're going to open the hotel this year, we're really looking for a lot of people to fill the positions available. We're not discriminating anyone, anyone can apply as long as he or she has the skills for the job."

Kensington Hotel Saipan Human Resources manager Vivian Deleon Guerrero said applicants who passed the initial screening and interview would then be called for a second interview.

"They would still go through the whole process. We need to screen everyone who is applying for a job. Applicants, so far, today [Wednesday] are high. We haven't checked the list yet, but we think that it is already close to 200," added Deleon Guerrero.

She said that applicants must first register as they enter the multipurpose center and all the names are qualified for a mini raffle for the day. "We've been giving away some small prizes, gifts to the participants."

JON PEREZ

Kensington Hotel Saipan personnel, led by E-Land Group Human Resources and Customer Service director Ginger Choi and Human Resources manager Vivian Deleon Guerrero, interview applicants in yesterday's job fair at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in Susupe.

Deleon Guerrero said they expect more applicants today, the final day of the job fair. "People have been lining up since early [Wednesday] morning. Even when our staff were still putting up the decorations and setting up the tables and chairs."

"We told them they would [have to] wait a little longer since the job fair starts at 2pm. So they decided to come back. We expect more people [today]."

She said that most of the applicants are in the food and beverage department, front desk personnel, and kitchen staff.

"Kensington is a service-oriented business so we are looking for people who share our passion and who are motivated in helping us in promoting this philosophy."

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Courtesy resignations of Cabinet members in

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Over a dozen courtesy resignations have made it to the desk of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, as expected with the change in administration following the passing of the late governor Eloy S. Inos last December.

The resignations include current cabinet members and officials at special assistant posts of government, among others.

"Even though a call for courtesy resignation was not made by the administration, cabinet members and special assistants went ahead and submitted their courtesy resignations to allow the opportunity for Governor Torres and Lt. Governor Hocog to decide upon the re-organization of the cabinet and special assistant posts," Office of the Governor spokesperson Ivan Blanco said yesterday.

Current Cabinet members are, among others, Finance Secretary Larissa Larson, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Laura Ogumoro, Labor Secretary Edith DeLeon Guerrero, Department of Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Richard Seman, Department of Commerce Secretary Mark O. Rabauliman, Department of Public Safety Commissioner Robert Guerrero, Department of Public Works Secretary James Ada, Department of Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner Clyde Norita, and Department of Public Lands Secretary Pete A. Tenorio.

Sablan calls for 'rental vehicle' registration

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Rep. Vinson Sablan (Ind-Saipan) has prefilled a bill to differentiate between commercial rental cars and cars for personal use that are registered in the Commonwealth.

House Bill 19-25 notes that car rental businesses are being treated in the same manner and paying the same fees as individual citizens and that "action must be taken to differentiate" the two, as tourist investments and the demand for car rentals increase.

Sablan

H.B. 19-125 seeks to, among others, require a registration fee of $150 for car rental vehicles, and require rental car license plates to display a "symbol, word or letter" that identifies them as such.

In an email, Sablan said it is evident that there has been a significant increase in rental vehicles in the CNMI especially on Saipan. As driving is one of the main attractions and recreational activities for tourists, Sablan said, the CNMI has to make sure that "our community is safe from inexperienced operators."

"We all have been seeing and feeling this on the roads and highways on a daily basis," Sablan said. "Our government needs to have accountability of how many vehicles are being registered as rental vehicles, especially with the rise of rental vehicle companies that is very visible. Before this bill, I believe there was no record or count of how many rental vehicles are on our roads."

Portions of the funding from this bill will go to the creation of general rules of the roads manuals, which will be written, in different languages for visiting drivers to have to ensure safety for all on the roads of the CNMI.

There is also a portion of funding from this bill, which will go into the effective enforcement of this bill if it becomes law.

Federal courts sponsor civics contest

SAN FRANCISCO—A civics contest organized by federal courts in the western United States offers high school students a chance to win cash prizes while learning about their constitutional rights.

"50 Years After the Miranda Decision: How Federal Courts Defined the Rights of the Accused" is the theme of an essay and video competition open to sophomores, juniors and seniors in public, private and parochial schools or to home-schooled students of equivalent status. Individual students can compete in the essay contest, while individuals and teams of up to three students can enter the video contest. Visit http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest for more information.

The contest is organized by the Courts and Community Committee of the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, governing body for federal courts in the West. U.S. district courts in nine western states and two Pacific Island jurisdictions are cosponsors. Prizes of $2,000, $1,000 and $500 will be awarded to the first-, second- and third-place winners in both the writing and video competition.

Winners will be announced in June.

The contest celebrates the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Miranda v. Arizona in which the court ruled that someone taken into police custody must be informed—prior to questioning—of their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Students are asked to consider how "Miranda Rights" came to be defined, how they are safeguarded by the federal courts and why they are so important to our system of justice.

"Civics education really begins with the Constitution," said the U.S. District Judge Janis L. Sammartino of San Diego, who chairs the Courts and Community Committee. "The contest will uniquely add to the student's knowledge and understanding of the basis of our democracy."

For more information, contact Katherine Rodriguez, coordinator of the 2016 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, at (415) 355-8973 / civicscontest@ce9.uscourts.gov. ***(PR)***

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FIRE

From Page 1

mel at 11:22am.

Gersonde said firefighters and arson investigators from Susupe Fire Station responded and placed the blaze under control at 11:33am.

Gersonde said arson investigators determined that mechanical failure caused the fire.

"The cause of the fire is still under investigation. Updates will be released when they are available," he said.

No information was provided as to the owner of the car.

In the Puerto Rico fire, Gersonde said DFEMS received a call about a shipping container that was on fire at 12:15pm.

Gersonde said firefighters and arson investigators from Garapan and Susupe fire stations responded and place the fire under control at 12:23pm.

Arson investigators determined that the fire broke out after a worker was cutting the container using an acetylene torch.

The heat transferred from the container and ignited the combustible insulation of the container.

"The cause of the fire is accidental, therefore this case is closed by DFEMS," Gersonde said.

PUBLIC

From Page 1

monwealth, urging Guerrero to address these issues if confirmed.

Sen. Justo Quitugua (Ind-Saipan) said "from Rota to Tinian to Saipan" he has heard comments from the community on the issue of drugs.

Recalling words from a community pastor, Quitugua said, "ice [crystal methamphetamine] is like candy in the villages…because it gets down to the kids." He urged Guerrero to take a look at the issue. "If it's in the villages, it is in the schools also," Quitugua said.

Sen. Arnold Palacios (R-Saipan)—referring to criticism about Guerrero's experience—asked Guerrero point blank, "Are you ready to prove them wrong?"

Guerrero, in turn, said he was and added he would rely on officers "that know," saying that he was there to support, to be "a pen," and to spend for the needs of his police officers.

Sen. Sixto Igisomar (R-Saipan), for his part, said the "the option before us shouldn't be too difficult." He said Guerrero's experience gives confidence that he can lead the "men and women in blue."

Committee chair Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian) also asked Guerrero to work on concerns regarding court cases thrown out due to procedural mistakes made by law enforcement. "Everybody makes a mistake, but we cannot continue to make the same mistake," said Cruz, urging Guerrero to work with his department and the Attorney General's Office on this.

In speaking before the committee, Guerrero recalled his efforts as a former Department of Corrections commissioner. He noted, among others, a program developed that offered vocational training to prisoners in carpentry, masonry, and electric and plumbing.

"I also did not hesitate to remove [DOC] officers" that showed "improper conduct and activity," Guerrero also said.

Speaking to criticism of his experience, Guerrero said his "job was not to be [a] police officer" or an expert, but to provide leadership and guidance.

Allaying any doubts of insincerity or "double talk," Guerrero said, "With me, what you see is what you get" and directed senators to some of the concerns hindering the department's morale, such as the lack of a raise in pay since the 1990s.

He said officers make only 16,000 a year and that means about $7.69 per hour, which only can buy about "2 gallons of gas, and four cans of Spam."

"The uniforms of our men and women have not been replaced in years," he said, calling these problems a strain on officers' families and a need for necessary funds and proper equipment.

The Senate is expected to confirm Guerrero's appointment as DPS commissioner in a session later this week.

A full house showed up at the Senate chamber yesterday in support of Guerrero.

Among them were Department of Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Richard Seman and former DPS commissioner James Deleon Guerrero, now special assistant for Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Seman attested to Guerrero's ability to work well with personnel and staff. "He has the ability to connect professionally and on a personal basis," he said.

Seman recalled Guerrero's time as a Smiling Cove marina manager, saying that Guerrero transformed the marina "into what it is now."

"This is the kind of leadership that we really need," Seman said.

Deleon Guerrero, for his part, said criticism against Guerrero's experience "is quite unfair."

He disclosed that he personally recommended Guerrero to the DPS post to Gov. Ralph Torres, upon being informed of his appointment to Homeland Security.

PROSECUTION

From Page 1

dence will show that on Aug. 3 and 4, 2012, law enforcement officers were trying to locate former attorney general Edward Buckingham and serve him with "some papers."

Hasselback said the evidence will show Ogumoro organized the protective detail service and the purpose was to prevent Buckingham from being served.

If not for the intervention of two FBI special agents, Hasselback said, the documents would not have been served to Buckingham at the Delta Airlines VIP lounge at the airport on Aug. 4, 2012, at 4am.

Hasselback said the evidence will show that Ogumoro was the acting DPS commissioner and the "top cop" in the CNMI at that time.

He said as the "top cop" of the CNMI, Ogumoro ordered his officers to arrest a fellow officer who is trying to do her job.

In Ogumoro's opening statements, Arriola said the two OPA investigators assigned to serve summons did not do their job.

Arriola said if the two investigators have done their job, they would have not been in court.

Arriola said the defendant acted reasonably and acted pursuant to the law as the acting DPS commissioner.

"He (Ogumoro) is authorized as DPS acting commissioner to provide escort services," the defense lawyer said.

David-Atalig testified how she and her then-chief Juan Santos tried but failed to serve summons to Buckingham after the "higher up" from the Department of Public Safety threatened to arrest them on Aug. 3, 2012.

David-Atalig said she learned that the "higher up" being referred to by Police Officer Camacho was then DPS deputy commissioner Ogumoro.

David-Atalig said she and Santos proceeded to the Commonwealth Ports Authority, but before getting there, Camacho called, stating that their shift supervisor, Mendiola, instructed him to tell them to cease serving the penal summons to Buckingham or they would be arrested.

She said she was surprised with Camacho's call and statement that they would be arrested if they would not cease the operation to serve the summons.

David-Atalig said apparently Ogumoro was upset as to who gave OPA authority to serve summons to Buckingham.

She said Camacho apologized, saying he could not assist them further.

They went back to the Aquarius Beach Tower Hotel and they learned that the Buckinghams were leaving Saipan that early morning of Aug. 4, 2012.

"I felt threatened, scared because I was threatened with an arrest," she said.

She said Santos then called the FBI and informed them what happened.

David-Atalig said since OPA's and DPS' attempt to serve the summons failed, they called the FBI to make sure they could serve the summons.

David-Atalig described the scene at the airport in the early morning of Aug. 4, 2012, when Ogumoro was walking with the Buckinghams at the entrance of departure area.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Former Department of Public Safety deputy commissioner Ambrosio T. Ogumoro smiles before entering the courtroom in his ongoing jury trial in Superior Court yesterday. Ogumoro is facing 11 charges in connection with his alleged role in shielding then-Attorney General Edward Buckingham from being served with penal summons in August 2012.

She testified how the two FBI special agents managed to serve the summons to Buckingham at the airport.

David-Atalig, who is now a federal probation officer, said she was involved in the investigation pertaining to the shielding of Buckingham from being served with the penal summons.

She testified, among other things, about documents pertaining to Buckingham texting then-governor Benigno R. Fitial regarding penal summons.

Hasselback presented videos showing how Ogumoro and several other DPS and CPA officers escorted Buckingham from the Aquarius Beach Tower Hotel in Chalan Kanoa to the Saipan International Airport in the early morning of Aug. 4, 2012.

FBI special agent Park testified how he was involved in assisting OPA investigators in serving penal summons to Buckingham. Park also recounted how Ogumoro tried to prevent him and another FBI special agent from serving the penal summons to Buckingham.

To be threatened with arrest in doing their job is "highly unusual," said Park, referring to the alleged threat to arrest the two OPA investigators.

Park said when he and another FBI special agent entered the airport's VIP lounge, Ogumoro walked toward them in a rapid fashion and confronted him for being there.

Park said he told Ogumoro he has a legitimate Superior Court-issued penal summons for Buckingham.

The agent said Ogumoro told him that he was under an executive order to escort Buckingham and his wife to the plane.

Park said he explained to Ogumoro that if he places a hand on him or attempts to have physical contact on him, he will be placed under arrest.

He said Ogumoro stated he will talk with Buckingham.

Park said Ogumoro went to Buckingham and then asked him (Park) if Buckingham is allowed to fly.

Park said he explained to Ogumoro that it's not an arrest warrant but penal summons to appear in court.

The FBI special agent said he then approached Buckingham, identified himself and placed on the table the penal summons.

Park said he and the other special agent then left.

On denying Ogumoro's motion to dismiss the charges, Wiseman yesterday ruled that the valid service requirement as provided under the law is immaterial to the obstructing justice charge.

Ogumoro's motion was to dismiss five charges: conspiracy to commit obstructing justice: interference with a law enforcement officer or witness, three counts of misconduct in public office, and one count of obstructing justice: Interference with a law enforcement officer or witness.

The other charges are conspiracy to commit theft of services, two counts of misconduct in public office, and theft of services.

Wiseman reiterated his concerns raised in his Jan. 19, 2016, order that at the outset, the court must take serious issue with Ogumoro's untimely and improper submission of a substantive motions on the eve of trial—leaving no reasonable time for the government to file a substantive opposition brief.

In doing so, Wiseman said, Ogumoro violated the court's pre-trial motion hearing deadline of Dec. 16, 2015, by more than a month.

Wiseman said even if the court were to waive the requirement that a party complies with the pre-trial order, Ogumoro would still not be in compliance with the Rules of Criminal Procedure.

In addition, Wiseman noted that Ogumoro had almost three years to file his legal objections to the information, dated March 20, 2013.

The judge said more than two years have elapsed since the court's finding that the penal summons issued against Ogumoro's alleged co-conspirator, Buckingham, was invalid.

Turning to the merits of Ogumoro's motion to dismiss, Wiseman said he finds his argument to be unfounded.

Ogo is new resident executive for Indigenous Affairs

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

For a position that has been vacant for over two years, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has appointed an individual for the resident executive for Indigenous Affairs, according to press secretary Ivan Blanco.

Crispin Manglona Ogo—a former House representative from Rota during the 14th and 15th legislatures—was appointed to the position by Torres last Jan. 15.

Ogo intends to expand upon the requirements of the office, Blanco said in an email. Ogo plans to "coordinate the development, distribution, adoption, and translation of a comprehensive history of the Marianas, establish a community foundation for the advancement of the indigenous people, assist and promote local entrepreneurial development, as well as coordinate the translation and distribution of such official documents as the Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Covenant and the analyses thereof."

Ogo also intends to plan for the establishment of "the Indigenous Cultural Center and the Indigenous Hall of Fame, coordinate an annual cultural festival, develop, and implement a long-range plan to assist and promote the entry of the indigenous people into professional and technical institutions of higher education, serve as an advocate of positions taken by indigenous people on issues brought before them, and ensure local participation in executive managerial decision-making in the government and private sector."

Blanco said that after service to the CNMI, Ogo has been involved with various non-profit organizations in the CNMI and in the U.S. mainland. "Most notably, Mr. Ogo was instrumental in lobbying the Oregon legislature to pass legislation to grant residents of territories and citizens of freely associated states the same privileges as Oregon residents for drivers license renewal dates," Blanco said.

"It used to be on an yearly basis, but because of this successful revision, residents of the territories and citizens of the freely associated states do not need to renew their drivers license every year."

Among others non-profits, Ogo is currently working with the San Antonio Community Action Network, which promotes youth and adult activities to combat drug/alcohol abuse.

MHPC: On-island psychiatrists are needed

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth needs a psychiatrist or two that will always be on island, according to the Mental Health Planning Council.

MHPC noted the lack of on-island psychiatrist that could better serve the residents of the islands.

"We've noticed, as community members, a lack of mental health and substance abuse services, primarily mental health, especially when it comes to the prison setting," council secretary Gregory Borja said.

"Right now we're limited to one psychiatrist who comes on island once a week," he added, noting that 12 years ago, there were two psychiatrists in the CNMI.

Borja said one doctor who comes in once a week from Guam may not be enough to help everyone that needs assistance with those who are living in the hospital as residents as well as the "large population" of outpatients or people that receive mental health services but are out in the community.

"Sometimes she hasn't got a chance to meet with everybody," Borja said.

Borja said there is also limited service when it comes to mental health and that "other than medication, there is really not much that is going on" and that services such as therapy and counseling should be made more available.

"The public needs somebody out here, to have somebody help somebody in that moment you need it. You come in, there's nobody there, what would you do?" echoed council Brett M. Halstead.

"We need those services also to reach out also to Tinian and Rota as well," Borja said.

The council said they are trying to get technical assistance on how to get doctors on island.

"We're more like an advisory and review group. We're not a governing body so what we can do is just express our concerns with our Legislature, to the board at [the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.]," Borja said.

CNMI MathCourt team to start practice

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

CNMI MathCourt team head coach Manny Borja will begin preparing the six members and six alternates in time for the Mathleague.org national finals set on May 13 at the Brookside Charter School in Kansas City, Missouri.

Borja, an environmental engineering graduate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also coached last year's team.

Agape Christian School senior Bei Bei Chen heads the team and will be joined by Marianas High School's B. Masrur Alam, fellow ACS students Claire Song and Allan Zhao, and Saipan International School's Myung Jae Cho and Jaehoon Jang.

Three of the six alternates were also from ACS—En Jie Hu, Andrea Feng and Rebecca Xu—while the rest are from MHS and Marianas Baptist Academy.

Borja said he would drill the team with exercises and problems in algebra, geometry, and trigonometry.

"My advice to them is to study important math topics, review each problem and talk to those people who experienced competing in the nationals before," said Borja.

More than 200 CNMI private and public high school students joined in the Commonwealth's MatchCourt competition. From 200, the list was trimmed to 60 and to 22, who qualified for the CNMI state finals held last Saturday at the Saipan Southern High School.

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BOE didn't ask to have oversight on private schools

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

The provision that would give the CNMI State Board of Education oversight and licensing powers over private schools that was included in a bill that will overhaul the Education Act of 1998 did not come from the board itself.

BOE chair Herman Guerrero said in a recent board meeting that he "did not know where that came from."

"It was not in the proposed bill that we originally submitted to the Legislature. Somehow, members of the Legislature felt that there is a need for certain oversight responsibilities," Guerrero said in an interview.

Guerrero commended Coalition of Private Schools president and BOE's non-public school representative Galvin Deleon Guerrero for organizing the coalition and said that they are working together.

"Hopefully the coalition will be policing among themselves and will bring education standards comparable. I'm sure that will be great for every child in the Commonwealth regardless of race or nationality," Guerrero said.

Asked if the board supports the provision in the bill, Guerrero said: "In a sense, the language is…It's not with PSS because we don't license them. It's really the Department of Commerce that licenses them. If they already licensed them, let them be the one to do the responsibilities."

Among the bill's amendments grant power to the education board in the establishment of non-public schools in the CNMI and how these non-public schools can get government assistance.

It adds that anyone who wants to establish or operate a nonpublic school must submit an application for a charter to be approved and issued by the education board and that the applicant must satisfy the board's curriculum, building safety, health, sanitation, and any other standards required by the CNMI or state board.

The bill has been tabled after the coalition asked for time to review and comment on these provisions.

Guerrero said it will be okay "as long as somebody is certifying that they have met the health and safety standards."

He added that he is also not interested in looking at the curriculum as long as the schools are meeting certain standards as well as being recognized nationally, like PSS and some private schools.

However, Guerrero noted that they would like for private schools to be more transparent.

"I would like to see more openness and transparency also at the private school. I think everybody deserves to know what's going on. They don't like public, government interference, well, if you don't like public interference then you shouldn't accept [education tax credits]," Guerrero said.

Guam vets continue spay, neuter program

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Guam veterinarians Dr. Jennifer Landis and technician Bambi Leone have been assisting local animal volunteers and staff of the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Control Office with the spay and neuter program.

Landis and Leone arrived on Saipan in early January and have been spaying and neutering dogs from the animal shelter in Lower Base and those brought in by other pet owners since Jan. 4. The program ends on Feb. 4.

The Saipan Mayor's Office and the National Humane Society are also supporting the program, according to Saipan Cares for Animals, CNMI vice president and head volunteer Elizabeth Pliscou.

Pliscou said this would be the longest period of time that a veterinarian and a technician would work with the program.

"We are grateful for their [Landis and Leone] help and volunteer work. Saipan is just a small island and as much as possible we want to control and we're trying to reduce the animals, specifically the dog population here," said Pliscou.

Pliscou said pet owners who bring their dogs or cats must give a $25 donation. "But there are some who tell us that they can't donate because of lack of funds but there are also people who give more than $25 to help those who have no money."

She added that Landis and Leone have two more weeks on Saipan. "They've been staying at Kanoa Resort for free. Kanoa has always been helpful to us every time volunteer vets come here."

A total of 95 dogs have been spayed or neutered with 40 more at the animal shelter to undergo the procedure.

Pliscou said that they still need volunteers to help them in the daily chores of taking care of the animals at the shelter.

JON PEREZ

An animal shelter volunteer, left, helps Saipan Cares for Animals, CNMI vice president Elizabeth Pliscou in prepping up a dog for surgery as veterinary technician Bambi Leone looks on in yesterday's spay and neuter program at the animal shelter in Lower Base.

"We have five regular volunteers but we could use more. Also, aside from spaying and neutering the animals, they [Landis and Leone] are also teaching us what we need to know for the animals to maintain good health."

Pliscou is also encouraging people to adopt some of the dogs at the animal shelter or surrender their pets for those who can no longer take care of them.

Rodney Babauta, Lee Mark Deleon Guerrero, Ton Leon Guerrero, and Jaime Toytoy make up the staff of the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Control Office. They have been patrolling the streets and catching stray dogs.

Woman pleads not guilty to charge she made false statements to USCIS

Jonie Esther Babauta Uddin has entered a not guilty plea to the charge that she made fraudulent statements to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Uddin, through court-appointed counsel Mark Hanson, waived the formal advisement of her constitutional rights and the reading of the charge against her.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy set the jury trial for March 22, 2016.

Assistant U.S. attorney Russell Lorfing appeared for the government.

The indictment charged Uddin with one count of false statement.

According to the indictment, Uddin made the false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and representations to USCIS on Nov. 18, 2011.

In a form I-130, Jonie Uddin allegedly represented that she lived in Chalan Piao with Tamiz Uddin, which she knew such representations were false in that she did not live in Chalan Piao and had never lived with Tamiz Uddin.

Form I-130 refers to a U.S. citizen's petition for an alien relative.

Additionally, in the form G-325 (biographic information), the defendant again allegedly represented that she lived in Chalan Piao.

A separate indictment was recently filed against Tamiz Uddin charging him with one count of false statement.

According to the indictment, Tamiz Uddin made false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and representations to USCIS on Aug. 15, 2013.

In an interview with an USCIS employee, Tamiz Uddin allegedly represented that he lived with Jonie Uddin, which he knew such representation was false and fraudulent in that he did not lived with Jonie Uddin. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Prime Pacific Properties, Inc. dba: Beacon Hill Condominium

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Prime Pacific Properties, Inc. dba: Beacon Hill Condominium is proposing to construct and operate an eleven storey condotel with 15 units of two to three storey villas . This use is classified as "Planned Development over 48ft" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This proposal is located on lot #069 D 05 along Isla Drive in Navy Hill. This lot is zoned as Rural.

Date: January 28, 2016, Thursday
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd Fl. Joeten Dandan Comm'l Bldg.

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, Wednesday, January 27, 2016 or via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp , or US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Castle Project (CNMI), LLC

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Castle Project (CNMI), LLC has proposed to amend its Conditional Use Permit to renovate and utilize an additional existing warehouse structure formerly used by Top Fashion Factory for employee quarters. This use is classified as "Institutional Residential" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located in Tanapag on lots 030 B 15 & 030 B 13. These lots are zoned as Mixed Commercial.

Date: January 28, 2016, Thursday
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd Fl. Joeten Dandan Comm'l Bldg.

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/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

City Auto Shop

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. City Auto Shop is proposing to operate a general auto shop with paint booth. This use is classified as "Vehicle Repair, General" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This proposal is located on lot #004 D 44 along Puti Tainobiu Avenue in Garapan. This lot is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

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/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

Pilot CBHS/NCD survey to start this weekend

»Data collectors undergoing training

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Data collection for the pilot, hybrid survey that would collect data on the prevalence of non-communicable diseases as well as information on adult substance abuse and mental health in the Commonwealth will finally begin this weekend after being postponed since last year.

Enumerators or data collectors for the Non-Communicable Diseases/CNMI Behavioral Health Survey who will be randomly sampling from house-to-house are currently undergoing training this week.

According to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.-Division of Public Health's Non-Communicable Disease Bureau administrator Becky Robles, the survey is a huge collaboration of agencies.

Aside from the hospital, the CNMI Department of Commerce and the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Service, the Pacific Island Health Officers Association, as well as the University of Hawaii are involved in the survey.

The survey, which includes a hybrid of indicators from the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization, will be implemented for the first time in the Pacific Region.

Aside from answering questions about their health, the survey would also include physical biometric or anthropometric measurements such as blood samples to measure fat and sugar, blood pressure, height, and weight.

"The other Pacific Island jurisdictions are also waiting for us to do this because it is a pilot project. It's a hybrid from CDC and WHO. They want to see how we do this survey and if it's successful, then others in the Pacific Region will also want to adopt this survey," Robles said. The survey was initially set for August this year but was pushed back to September due to the need for more information and data. It was later on moved to this year because of Typhoon Soudelor.

Robles

Health officials said the survey is very important in giving light to the prevalence of NCD in the commonwealth.

"The reason that this survey is high priority is because we actually don't have data. We don't know what the prevalence of things like obesity, tobacco-use, diabetes, hypertension," PIHOA-NCD regional epidemiologist for the USAPI's Haley Cash said.

"We don't have any adult baseline population-based data for non-communicable diseases and their risk factors," Robles echoed.

Currently, the only data for CNMI are taken from those who visit the hospital in relation to NCDs. This, however, cannot represent the Commonwealth's population.

The data will also help in future programs for public health as well as possible funding and grants.

"We will use the information that we collected to tailor programs," Cash said.

"With this data, we will able to know what our problem areas are," Robles said, "We are very grant driven, and as we know, the grants are very data-driven. Without the adequate data, it's really hard to state your case. There's a lot of data that we have but it's the 'pockets,' not necessarily for the whole population."

Munson denies as moot reservist's request to compel prosecution

The federal court yesterday denied as moot a reservist's request to compel the U.S. government to produce, among other things, all evidence beyond what it had already provided to him.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Senior Judge Alex R. Munson said the court finds that the relief sought by defendant Jordan M. Jucutan's motion has been achieved.

Munson said the parties in the case agree that the U.S. government has thus far complied with its obligations to produce all known exculpatory evidence as required under the law.

Munson said the U.S. government also acknowledges its ongoing duties to produce exculpatory evidence and that the parties have agreed to the timely production of other requested documents.

Jucutan, a teacher and a member of the U.S. Army Reserves, is facing charges that he stole referral bonuses totaling $9,000 by fraudulently claiming that he recruited five potential soldiers and claiming the cash incentives for himself. He pleaded not guilty of the charges.

Munson

Jucutan, through court-appointed counsel Pamela Brown, recently filed a motion asking the court to compel the U.S. government to produce all exculpatory and impeachment evidence beyond what it had already provided to him.

Brown also moved to compel the prosecution to produce a list of expert and lay witnesses and to produce all documents, which the U.S. government intends to introduce at trial to prove Jucutan's criminal culpability.

In the U.S. government's response, the U.S. Attorney's Office asserted that it had already produced all known exculpatory evidence and agreed to provide other exculpatory materials.

The prosecution also agreed to produce its witness list along with other materials two weeks prior to trial.

In denying defendant's motion, Munson said at the hearing on Friday, Jucutan accepted the representations made by the prosecution that it had complied with its obligations to produce exculpatory evidence.

Munson said the defendant also agreed that it was reasonable for the U.S. government to produce its witness list two weeks prior to trial.

The judge said the defendant abandoned his request for the prosecution to produce all documents it intends to introduce at trial.

The jury trial will be on Feb. 16, 2016.

Jucutan is requesting to continue the trial based on the need for more time to investigate the case, consult with witnesses, and review documents in order to adequately prepare his defense.

An indictment charged Jucutan with theft of government property, five counts of aggravated identity theft, and nine counts of wire fraud. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC.
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL.: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Estates of	:	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 04-0498**
MATEO M. TAISACAN and	:	**AND**
SABINA M. TAISACAN,	:	**CONSOLIDATES**
	:	**CASE**
Deceased.	:	**(C.A. No. 07-0289)**

SECOND AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of the Estates of Mateo M. Taisacan and Sabina M. Taisacan in and to the following property: an agricultural homestead situated in Ginalagan, Rota, Northern Mariana Islands, designated as Tract no. 22127, containing an area of 25,000 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division of Lands and Surveys' Official Survey Plat no. 2066/79 dated December 20, 1984.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 29, 2016, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 28th day of December, 2015:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ., F-0122
Attorney for Administratix

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular meeting of the Zoning Board will be held on Thursday, January 28, 2016 at 5:00 PM, Zoning Board Conference Room 2nd floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Bldg.
(Tel: 234-9661 • Fax: 234-9666 • e-mail: www.zoning.gov.mp)

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of 12/29/15 meeting minutes
5. Public Comments (not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings)

B. Public Hearings

Conditional Use Application #2016-0006: City Auto Shop is proposing to operate a general auto shop with paint booth. This use is classified as "Vehicle Repair, General" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This proposal is located on lot #004 D 44 along Puti Tainobiu Avenue in Garapan. This lot is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

Conditional Use Application #2016-0136: Prime Pacific Properties, Inc. dba: Beacon Hill Condominium is proposing to construct and operate an 11 storey condotel with 15 units of two to three storey villas. This use is classified as "Planned Development over 48ft" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This proposal is located on lot #069 D 05 along Isla Drive in Navy Hill. This lot is zoned as Rural.

Conditional Use Application #2016-0143 (Amendment): Castle Project (CNMI), LLC has proposed to amend its Conditional Use Permit to renovate and utilize an additional existing warehouse structure formerly used by Top Fashion Factory for employee quarters. This use is classified as "Institutional Residential" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located in Tanapag on lots 030 B 15 & 030 B 13. These lots are zoned as Mixed Commercial.

C. Communications

D. Old Business
1. Nuisance Abatement and Blighted Properties Maintenance Act (status)

E. New Business
1. Office Operations Reports (Permits, Enforcement)

F. Executive (Closed) Session

G. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting, Adjourn.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Administrator, Therese T. Ogumoro, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

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Contact: 670-483-1726 or
Email: islarealtysaipan@gmail.com

Following Information/Documents Required
Property Map/As Built Map/ Total Land Area
If available for existing building showing exact location & building details
Owner Title Information
Owner Asking Price

Remengesau to lead MTEC Tourism Summit speakers

Palau President Tommy Remengesau, Jr., a world leader in environmental conservation, will lead the list of guest speakers in the Marianas Tourism Education Council Tourism Summit set for Jan. 28 at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan.

Remengesau will be joined by former CNMI lieutenant governor and avid fisherman Diego Benavente; Dr. Peter Houk, assistant professor of Marine Biology at the University of Guam; and Angelo Villagomez of the Pew Charitable Trusts.

With the theme "One Ocean, One Heart," the summit is expected to gather 300 students from school MY WAVE Club to learn more about tourism, with special emphasis on the ocean as one of the Northern Mariana Islands' more important tourist attractions.

Remengesau, the eighth president of the Republic of Palau, is the first Palauan to be elected as president three times. In 2014, the voice for the environment in the United Nations system, the United Nations Environmental Programme, awarded Remengesau with its top accolade—The Champion of the Earth award—for his visionary leadership in strength ening Palau's economic resilience by spearheading national initiatives to protect its biodiversity.

Remengesau, Jr.

Remengesau is now spearheading a historic effort in the establishment of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary, signed into law on Oct. 28, 2015. This large-scale marine protected area that will cover 100 percent of Palau's waters (over 600,000 square km) and will include a 80 percent no-take reserve and a 20 percent protected domestic fishing zone, providing even greater protection for Palau's environment while further enhancing Palau's tourism revenues. The world's sixth largest fully protected marine area, the Palau National Marine Sanctuary is Palau's contribution to preserving the world's ocean resources.

Born and raised on Saipan, Benavente understands the importance of the ocean and marine life. Benavente's father was a fisherman who taught his young son how to swim, cast a fishing net, and troll with lines and lures, which were hand-made by local fishermen. Under a bill authored by Benavente that became Public Law 17-27 on Jan. 27, 2011, the NMI became the first U.S. territory to ban the sale, trade, distribution, and possession of shark fins. This would inspire other island nations and countries to pass their own shark protection laws.

Benavente serves on the board of trustees on the Micronesia Conservation Trust and is a member of the Saipan Fishermen's Association. Recently, he attended the "Our Ocean" conference where critical ocean issues were addressed including sustainable fishing and marine pollution.

Houk is a marine biologist with expertise in coral-reef ecology, fisheries, and conservation biology. He has spent over 15 years studying the near shore reefs of CNMI, and greater Micronesia, while producing sound research to improve management. During this time he earned his PhD from the Florida Institute of Technology, and then co-founded a non-profit organization based in Saipan that improved science-to-management frameworks across Micronesia. He is also a passionate fisherman, with interests in sustaining fish populations for local consumption, tourism economies, and the many other ecosystem services reefs provide us with. In 2013, Houk became the newest addition to the University of Guam Marine Laboratory faculty. His main roles include developing the technical skill-sets of students that are needed for successful research, and producing science that has a positive impact on society.

Villagomez is an officer with Pew's Global Ocean Legacy project. He has helped secure the designation of the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument by the U.S. government, as well as passage of more than two dozen shark conservation laws in small Pacific and Caribbean island states. Villagomez has more than 10 years of grassroots experience campaigning for ocean protections and has worked for the League of Conservation Voters, the Smithsonian, and the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance.

"I'm excited about the knowledge and shared vision that the summit's guest speakers will be offering to the students," said MTEC chair Vicky Benavente. "On behalf of the MTEC Board of Directors, I want to thank the government, community, and businesses who contributed to this year's summit, namely, Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), DFS, HANMI, and the First Hawaiian Bank."

At the tourism summit, the following offices and organizations will also provide hands-on demonstrations at breakout stations during the summit: Micronesia Islands Nature Alliance (MINA), Division of Fish and Wildlife, National Oceanic andAtmospheric Administration, Commonwealth Council for Arts& Culture, BECQ/ Coastal Resources Management, Northern Marianas College CREES, Northern Marianas Humanities Council, and the MVA. ***(MTEC)***

Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 13-14

The12thAnnual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival will be held on Feb. 13-14, 2016, highlighting the island's famously potent "donne sali" pepper. The two-day island-style celebration, known as the Pika Festival by locals, showcases local cuisine laced with the "pika" (spicy), eye-watering condiment.

Festival times will be from 2pm to 11pm on Feb. 13 and from 2pm to 11pm on Feb. 14. Activities will include non-stop live entertainment and arts and crafts sales. Competitions slated for the event include the "estafao pika" (spicy soup) cooking contest, the *umang* (hermit crab) races, a dragon boat race, and the *donni sali* eating competition, itself. The event will be held again this year at Kammer Beach within walking distance of the seaport and downtown San Jose.

"This is always the people's festival," said MVA Tinian Office supervisor Vida Borja. "I sincerely hope that this much-awaited event will give enjoyment to all, including our visitors."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The 12thAnnual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival will be held on Feb. 13-14, 2016, on Tinian.

Although the annual Tinian Turquoise Blue and Reef Swim will not be held this year, a Pika Bike Race will be held on Feb. 13 at 6am at Kammer Beach, also the finish line. The 65K race is sponsored by the Marianas Visitors Authorit, Tinian Mayor's Office, and Bikers Association of Tinian. Ferry transportation between Saipan and Tinian is being arranged by the MVA for the festival weekend and a schedule will be announced shortly.

"During the planning stages of Tinian Turquoise Blue last year, there was uncertainty whether hotel rooms would be available at the time of the event, so we were not able to commit to the triathlon this year," said MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas. "However, we are really excited about the Pika Bike Race being planned, which will open up the many historic and scenic wonders of Tinian to bikers from Saipan who catch the ferry over. It's going to be a really fun weekend."

The event is co-sponsored by the MVA, Tinian Mayor's Office, Tinian Municipal Council, and members of the MVA, with support from other government agencies.

Tinian is also accessible within minutes of Saipan via airplane or via connecting flights from Rota and Guam. Available hotels on island include Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, Fleming Hotel, Lion House, Lorilyn's and Street Motel. Some hotels offer airport shuttle, as well.Air service is provided by Freedom Air and Star Marianas.

For more information, contact Vida Borja at 433-9365 or e-mail at vborja@mymarianas.com or Ryan Calvo at 664-200 or email at rcalvo@mymarianas.com. ***(MVA)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 21, 2000

NMC budget request for FY-01 slashed

The Northern Marianas College is faced with another year marred with financial constraints after the Office of Management and Budget slashed its budget request for fiscal year 2001 by $1.5 million. The OMB has given the college a $6.8 million budget ceiling for general operations. Majority of the amount will go to teaching and non-teaching personnel cost. The governor's budget office also capped the amount that can be allocated to the college under the Nonresident Workers Fund. Only about 15-20 percent of the total fund, or at least $1.17 million had been allotted to NMC. Allotment to the college from Public Law 10-66 will fund its vocational programs. NMC originally requested $1.57 million for the program.

MVA seeks $8 million budget for FY 2001

The Marianas Visitors Authority is seeking an $8 million budget for fiscal year 2001, a $2.2. million increase from this year's budget. MVA board chair David M. Sablan has expressed hope that the proposed budget will be approved by the Legislature without cuts so that they can effectively market the CNMI as an ideal destination in the Pacific. He warned that continuous budget cuts may affect current efforts to revive the ailing tourism economy. MVA has been planning to tap its alternative markets — Hong Kong and Taiwan but the money for promotion is not even enough to pursue Japan and Korea, its main source of visitors.

January 21, 2005

CPA is poised to award Saipan drydock project

The Commonwealth Ports Authority board of directors is inclined to approve the proposal submitted by Guam Industrial Services Inc., the sole bidder for the Saipan drydock project. In a meeting yesterday, board members said they will consider issuing a conditional approval to the bidder, which does business as Guam Shipyard. CPA executive director Carlos Salas noted that out of the 11 companies that expressed interest in the drydock project, Guam Shipyard was the only company that ended up submitting a formal proposal. CPA is seeking to enter into a build-operate-transfer agreement with the contractor.

House still wary about power privatization

The House remains wary over the proposed power privatization, saying that it has not been getting necessary information about the plan. Vice Speaker Timothy Villagomez, who led a public hearing last week on privatization and other utility issues, said there remains legal impediments that have yet to be resolved. These impediments, he said, include the dispute between the CUC and Commonwealth Development Authority, land concession, and employees' tenure. He said that CUC has already received three proposals for the power plant privatization. The board also expressed confidence that the presence of Harris Group consultancy would result in excellent work.

January 21, 2006

PSS revises Compact-funding allocations

The Board of Education of the Public School System has approved the revisions on how PSS will use the Compact Impact funds allocated to the education system in the CNMI. In the BOE special board meeting held Friday morning at the BOE Conference Room on Capitol Hill, the board voted unanimously and favorably for the revised budget proposal in its use of the Compact Impact money. In a letter transmitted by Education Commissioner Rita H. Inos to the board, she provided the board members copies of the "revised '06 and proposed '07 Compact Assistance Program narrative and budget." Inos said the combined two-year funding proposal would enable the PSS to make long overdue repairs with the 20 public schools in the CNMI.

MHS seeks help to repair aircon

Marianas High School, the largest public high school in the CNMI, has asked for the Transition Committee's help in repairing the school gymnasium's air conditioners. The MHS gymnasium was used as the alternative venue during the Inaugural Ceremony for Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Tim Villagomez last Jan. 9. MHS principal Karen Borja said the public school allowed the committee to use the gymnasium for free. Borja said she is pleading with the committee for assistance to repair the gymnasium air conditioner, either through financial or manpower assistance. She earlier expressed disappointment with a handful of community members who complained about the air conditioning inside the gymnasium during the inauguration. The principal said two of the four air conditioners in the gym have already been repaired using the money that they collected from those who rent the gym for special events. The two air conditioners were repaired at a cost of $28,000. Repairing the two others would require the same amount, "and we don't have the money anymore."

Fiesta holds gala masquerade party for staff

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan staff pose for a group photo during their annual Employees' Appreciation party last Jan. 14 at the hotel's Hibiscus Hall.

Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan held its annual Employees' Appreciation party last Jan. 14, at its Hibiscus Hall with a gala masquerade theme. Over 200 employees attended in their masquerade attire, one can hardly be recognized behind the glittering mask.

Abner Acosta, Fiesta Resort general manager, and his management team seized the evening as an opportunity to express their profound gratitude for the dedication and exertion Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan employees have shown.

"As a team, we have persevered together to overcome obstacles and to meet difficult deadlines. Without a doubt, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan has had its best year in decades." The regular employees from manpower agencies were also acknowledged for being a part of Fiesta Resort's winning team. "It is through your hard work and dedication that we are a great company today! We thank each one of you for the fantastic job that you do every day!"

A slide show of improvements made before and after Typhoon Souldelor was presented by Acosta and commented that tremendous effort that each and every employee has extended was obvious. Also presented was a slide show of upcoming improvements for Fiesta Resort in 2016.

The awarding of the annual achiever's awards for 2015 was announced and each winner was awarded a cash prize and presented a Certificate of Recognition in their respective categories. Top 25 volunteers for 2015 were also announced and were presented with a certificate of volunteerism and a cash prize.

The employees were treated to a delectable dinner while listening to the music of the Barabas band. Fun games, fabulous prizes, and entertainment by some of Fiesta Resort's department highlighted the evening.

The event came to an end at 10:30 in the evening with each employee leaving with smiling faces and looking forward to another annual Employee's Appreciation Party. ***(PR)***

MEETING NOTICE

Technical Project Planning Meeting

Former Tanapag Fuel Farm Above Ground Storage Tank Removal Project

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announces that it will convene a Technical Project Planning meeting to engage public participation regarding the Former Tanapag Fuel Farm Above Ground Storage Tank (AST) Removal project. A presentation has been prepared to provide an overview of the AST removal process and cleanup standards at the former AST locations.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representatives will be available during the meeting to receive your comments and to answer your questions regarding elements of the project.

Meeting Date: Thursday, January 21, 2016
Meeting Time: 5:30 pm
Tanapag Middle School Cafeteria
Tanapag, Saipan, CNMI

You may also submit written comments regarding the project to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Honolulu Engineer District
Programs and Project Management Division
Environmental Branch
Building 230
CEPOH-PP-E (Helene Takemoto)
Fort Shafter, HI 96858-5440
Fax: 808-835-4129.
E-mail: FUDS-POH@usace.army.mil

WANTED

NEWS REPORTER

The *Saipan Tribune* is looking for a FULL-TIME news reporter.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Above average writing skills and can work within deadlines;
- Fast learner, self-starter, and a team player;
- Computer literate;
- With photography skills;
- Must have reliable means of transportation.

If you have what it takes to be part of a dynamic team, email your résumé and samples of your work to editor@saipantribune.com. You may also drop it off at the *Saipan Tribune* office on the second floor of the JP Center Building on Beach Road, Garapan. ON-ISLAND HIRES PREFERRED.

Saipan Tribune, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer.
Qualified women, minorities, and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

Northern Marianas Humanities Council
Navigating the Human Experience

Vacancy Announcement

Board of Directors
Northern Marianas Humanities Council

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council (Council) wishes to announce a vacancy on its board of directors.

The Council is a non-profit private corporation affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council's mission is to "foster awareness, understanding and appreciation of the humanities through support of educational programs that relate the humanities to the indigenous cultures and to the intellectual needs and interests of the people of the Commonwealth."

The Council's board is comprised of thirteen volunteer members who serve three year terms. The Council strives to maintain a board that reflects a broad cross section of our CNMI community. The ideal candidate will have a strong desire to promote the Council's mission, programs, and activities and to actively participate in fundraising activities. Board responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Attending regular Council meetings four times annually;
- Raising funds for Council programs;
- Recruiting community partners;
- Promoting awareness about the Council's mission and its programs in the community;
- Attending Council programs and activities;
- Participating in working committee meetings;
- Evaluating Council programs and activities;
- Reviewing grant applications;
- Providing input about the humanities from various community members, and
- Attending conferences, workshops and other meetings on behalf of the Council.

Applicants are invited to submit their letters of interest and resumes to **Robert H. Hunter, Chair, Northern Marianas Humanities Council at Post Office Box 506437 Saipan, MP 96950** or delivered to the Council's office located in the Springs Plaza Building in Gualo Rai, Saipan. All letters of interest and resumes must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, **January 29, 2016.** For additional information, please contact the Council's Executive Director, Scott Russell, at telephone 235-4785 or visit the Council's website at www.northernmarianashumanities.org.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXVI, Issue No. 14

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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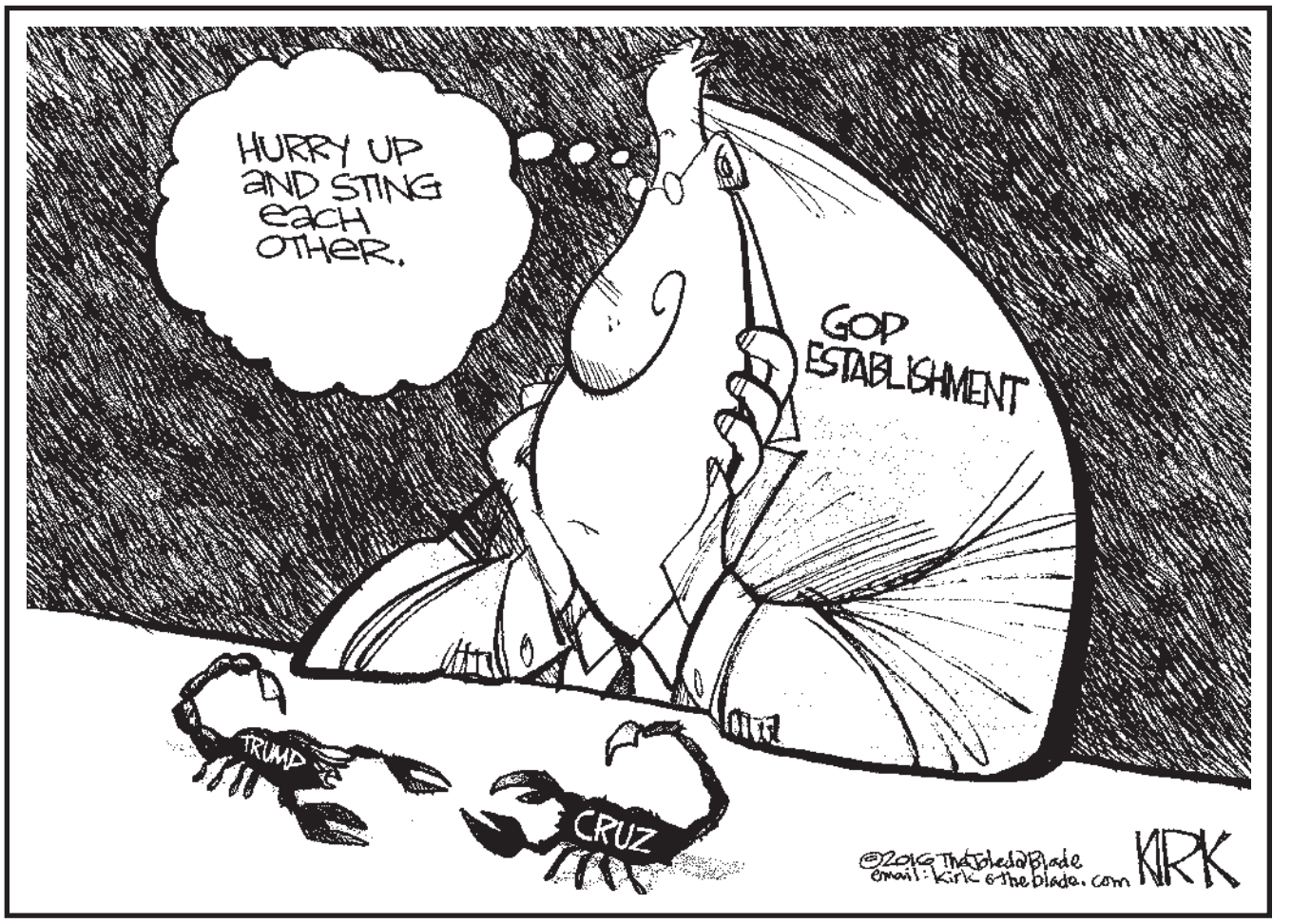

EDITORIAL

Iran, nukes and the hostage drama

First things first: It is terrific to see Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian freed after 544 days as a hostage in Iran. He and three other Americans of Iranian descent were released Saturday in exchange for U.S. prosecutors pardoning or dropping cases against 21 Iranians. A fifth American—a student—also was released, although his case was said to be unrelated.

The prisoner exchange punctuated a Cold War-esque day of drama as the Iranian nuclear deal with the West kicked in and economic sanctions lifted. Tehran will now reap billions of dollars, a vital infusion for its crippled economy.

Secretary of State John Kerry said the prisoner release deal should "remind us once again of diplomacy's power."

It also reminded us of the power of a rogue regime to seize hostages on trumped up charges and use them as pawns. This was a hostage negotiation, not a prisoner exchange.

The people released by the U.S. were accused of trying to steer around sanctions restricting trade with Iran. Those sanctions were in place to stop Iran's march to a nuclear weapon.

By contrast, no one freed by Iran on Saturday had been accused in public of any credible offense. Rezaian was convicted on phony espionage charges in a secret trial. Not a shred of evidence was released. He heard about his verdict not from a judge but from state television in Iran's notorious Evin Prison.

Amir Hekmati, a Marine veteran from Flint, Mich., was detained in 2011, weeks after arriving in Iran to visit his grandmother. He was convicted of spying for the CIA, which he denies.

Saeed Abedini, a Christian pastor from Boise, Idaho, was jailed in 2012 for allegedly trying to establish churches in homes.

Iran still is holding several other hostages, including Siamak Namazi, an Iranian-born American oil exec who was arrested in October while visiting his mother in Tehran. Namazi advocated better relations between the U.S. and Iran.

Iran had incentive to play nice, at least for the moment. It was on the edge of finally escaping international economic sanctions. That likely also helped in the quick release by Iran of 10 U.S. sailors who were in Iranian waters.

So does this bode well for the nuclear deal?

It won't be judged on whether Washington and Tehran cooperate diplomatically. The deal is about stopping Iran from building a nuclear weapon. On that score, Iran has completed several significant steps. It has shipped much of its low-enriched uranium to Russia. It has dismantled thousands of centrifuges. It has disabled the core of a reactor designed to produce plutonium, fuel for a nuclear weapon.

Now, though, Iran has what it wants. Its businessmen will rejoin the international business community. Its banks will be freed from restrictions. The cash windfall strengthens the hard-liners in Iran's Revolutionary Guard, which controls industry and business across the country.

The hard-liners, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, don't like the nuclear deal. They can be relied on to test Western resolve. Remember that Iran didn't come clean on its past nuclear work, as it was supposed to do under

See IRAN on Page 11

Sabalu Market

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

They look like retired couples, earning supplemental income from home gardens to retirement fund or SS benefit; or they are farmhands who are CWs on island putting in Ag production but dependent on an annual renewal to stay in spite of having American citizen children still to young to petition them.

They sell at the gathering every Saturday from 6am to 12noon locally grown vegetables and fruits at the Susupe Civic Center across the Multi-Purpose Center, with competition from the former Nauru building, the ground level of the 360 Business Center's festive atmosphere held under canopy into the night. The crowd seemed bigger at 360 than the one by the children's playground, and the greens are getting fresher, too.

I remember Sabalu as the time when Tony Pellegrino sold tank-grown shrimps inviting everyone especially those in Kagman to do likewise. Peripatetic published writer Walt Goodridge (who will lead a writer's workshop at the library on Saturday, Jan. 23, from 9am to 12pm) quietly be a demo to his vegetarian lifestyle. That was when the Sabalu Market was a community node; neighbors came to gossip, or, at least, traded news on the supply-and-demand of veggies, fish, and meat.

We have became so functional that the communal gatherings of old, the Friday *paseo* promenade, and the Thursday evening market across Kristo Rai Church, were reduced to gouging the tourists of their traveling moo-lah. Young adults from Korea, Japan, and China, driving rented Camaros and Mustangs, or the pedestrian newlyweds walking hand-in-hand on their honeymoon, are the target consumers these days. Young Micronesian dancers honing their skills at Kilili pavilion, undulated their trained hips Tahitian-style over a dinner course at a hotel, or on a make shift stage. They swayed graciously to ocean waves.

Sabalu might disappear as local markets stock more greens into their refrigerated shelves and the practicality of food supply take precedence over communal visits and gatherings but that's a price to pay for the absence of familiarity with vendors. We are now what we eat, no longer seeking familiar growers of what we eat.

A pity. It was fun when we can recognize each other's face and call each other by our first names! My beef and my grief as an old guardian of ways is that our social sense has been replaced by the unending chase of the mighty denarii!

But the Sabalu Market will not die as it is one of our island traditions as well as the outlet of produce from island farms that will not bend to the cheaper variety flown in from elsewhere, not to mention the frozen ones on containers via Guam, and Shanghai for those coming from many parts of China.

With a local Mart associated by implication with recent attempts to smuggle drugs into the country from China, I was not surprised to a thorough inspection of one of my bags coming through Customs at the CNMI airport on a recent trip originating from Shenyang via Shanghai to Saipan. I had two plastic containers full of photos and negatives that accumulated through the years before I disposed of my SLR camera and lenses for the sparse resolution of digitized images, and the custom officer looked at all the envelopes and packages in case I slipped a couple of packets of the white stuff.

Earlier in 2009, I was going to farm in Papago with abundant water from a natural spring on an 11-acre land. I bought a bush cutter, a saw and other farming tools from NY, but the farming urged dissipated when I noticed my partner growing a bed of marijuana in his yard. I did not have any moral problems with his robust garden save that I wrote for the dailies and the high profile left me vulnerable if associated with the illegal weed. Besides, it did not take long before the tools were stolen from his house shortly after I brought it to him.

The weed was to be decriminalized in the Commonwealth with a bill that failed though the reefer is widely puffed; the CNMI by Federal estimates is the second top per capita inhaler of psychotropic drug. The Feds allow States to decriminalize the use of cannabis. CNMI's initial thrust was stemmed.

In one of my recent classroom appearances, a student introduced herself Jamaican. A person who neither stopped talking, or cannot restrain herself from moving about her desk, claimed that she was born and raised in Kingston. I commented that in the Blue Mountains, ganja abundantly grew, and the first of only three times I smoked MJ was from 'dem hills. She went home and told her mother about my comments, and Mom immediately dialed the school to insist that the teacher refrain from encouraging students to smoke the weed.

I understand that the increased presence of sports car riders at Sabalu has to do with sales of Mary Jane, the price originally at $2.50 per ounce on locally grown weed has multiplied 10 times as the item are smuggled in from 'Pinas, or cultivated by Pinas on island. I am sure it is only a rumor, but where there is smoke, the habit is not too far behind.

See you Sabalu.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The life-changing magic of sharing housework

By ANN FRIEDMAN
Los Angeles Times

Ann Friedman is a contributing writer to the Los Angeles Times' *opinion section.*

A de-cluttering trend is sweeping the nation. Old sweaters and unread books have been put on notice: They're not safe in the attic anymore, they're destined for the curb, and it's all thanks to a Japanese woman named Marie Kondo. In her bestselling book, "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up," published in English in late 2014, Kondo elevated the annual closet purge to a Zen-like experience. Earlier this month, she published a companion text called "Spark Joy: An Illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up."

Although Kondo—who refers to herself as KonMari—and her fervent fans certainly spark feelings within me, joy is not among them. Concern is more like it. You see, I've noticed something peculiar about her acolytes: They're virtually all female. Indeed, New York magazine reported that the majority of Kondo's clients are women. At least in America, if not in Japan, "Kondoing" your home is a feminized phenomenon.

Why are 21st century American women who, generally speaking, are righteously angry about continuing disparities in household labor—flocking to a guru who promises to improve their organizational techniques?

Kondo's pitch isn't all that different from what you'd expect to find in a Container Store ad: A neat home is a happy home. But Kondo offers her tips with a side of existential advice. She counsels that "the best way to choose what to keep and what to throw away is to take each item in one's hand and ask: 'Does this spark joy?' If it does, keep it. If not, dispose of it."

Because Kondo cloaks her de-cluttering instructions in philosophical language and drops references to concepts such as the "sunk-cost fallacy," America's women have failed to notice that she's selling them Good Housekeeping 2.0. "Tidying is the act of confronting yourself," Kondo writes in her new book. "Cleaning is the act of confronting nature."

That's pithy, but it elides the fact that, for women who live with men or children, both tidying and cleaning are really acts of confronting other people—specifically, other people's messes.

Statistically speaking, women take on more domestic responsibilities than their male partners. In the United States, women spend an average of two hours more on chores a week. In one British survey, men acknowledged deliberately doing a poor job of cleaning the toilet, loading the dishwasher and vacuuming so that their female partners would be more inclined to just tackle those chores themselves. That survey was from 2014, not 1964. Even the most equality-minded heterosexual couples can find themselves defaulting to familiar roles when it comes to the mundane tasks of homemaking. She does the laundry; he takes out the trash.

Few reviews of the KonMari phenomenon or interviews with the tidiness guru point out how gendered the quest for household cleanliness remains, even in an era when most women work outside the home, too. Whereas other hipster trends, such as the rise in home cooking as an artful hobby, have nudged men to share historically female domestic burdens, the KonMari fad seems to be having the opposite effect. It's making women forget that cleaning is a chore and—insanely—embrace it as a path to liberation.

Some counterprogramming is in order, and perhaps the wake-up call lies within the Kondo oeuvre. She instructs her readers to ask themselves of each item in their home, "Am I having trouble getting rid of this because of an attachment to the past or because of a fear for the future?" The answer, when it comes to our collective gender defaults about household chores, is probably both. We're acting based on ingrained habits and messages from the past, and are unsure how to reset our relationships for the future.

You know what might really spark joy? If everyone who flocked to the KonMari method also resolved to reconsider their domestic roles. Last week, activists in the U.S. and the U.K. launched a global "#ChoreChallenge," which prompts straight couples to log the hours they spend doing housework, analyze them to see who does what, and then switch responsibilities. The organizers, which include the group Everyday Sexism, argue that if you're not deliberately paying attention it can be hard to notice which partner is doing the most work.

Both KonMari and the #ChoreChallenge acknowledge that we all need help in resetting our habits—but one is a blockbuster book and national obsession, while the other is a mere suggestion from a handful of activists. Perhaps we need a bestselling guide to examining why women still have a second shift at home: "The Life-Changing Magic of Letting Men Do the Tidying Up."

Time to regroup

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.

We live in a beautiful archipelago. It is endowed with white sandy beaches and turquoise waters that surround it. However, our sense of trust disappears as we ponder the incompetency of people upstairs on whose feet we've laid our future. Troubling!

As such, we're basically shipwrecked looking shockingly at the iceberg from our rescue boat. We hope to return to normalcy though even this is drowning under the rough waters of the lack of leadership at home.

Took a simple overview of where we're headed under such devastating conditions. It looks pessimistic what with the NMI government now the largest employer here piled with corruption and mounting deficit that that derail optimism. It's a serious indicator of what's coming down the pike. Could we continue prolonging self-denial?

Someone once said: "If you can't dazzle the people with brilliance; baffle them with BS." Seems fitting in this case, right? The villagers' mouthwash of corruption won't fade. It will linger!

The calculus of what politicians could do disappears into the sunset. Revenue generation is at its weakest. Would there be realistic fiscal trajectory so the rubber meets the proverbial road?

Some basic services may suffer heavy financial paralysis including the obligation to the settlement fund. This requires hard decision-making that should include paring down cost to skeletal level. Evidently, I'm not peddling fiction here. Bankruptcy has metastasized!

The projected FY16 budget is short by over $7 million while we yawn at the FY`15 deficit of $9.1 million. Factor in the need for the hospital and the school system and you're dealing with a fiscal challenge that is difficult to resolve. Collecting from new investments would take about two or more years. There's the troubling $510 million beastly cumulative deficit government managers must wrestle with.

Under dwindling fiscal resources employees must endure several more years of zero salary increase. Most would have to employ the culture of communal sharing to eat out of the same bowl of rice most of the next several years. I strongly suggest you guard the family purse in terms of expenditure. It's down to pennies, nickels, and dimes until the economy makes headway, if at all. No fun a task but a must to ensure we stay above water.

Obviously, there's a need for a plan on how to revive the local economy. In the absence of a fully thought-out plan we'd be employing ad hoc planning (plan by) rather than "plan for" what lies ahead. Putting together a plan is an issue the NMI can no longer ignore. It should secure the benefits of a blue print leaving room for policy refinement as it moves forward.

Understandably, the NMI isn't endowed with natural resources it could rely upon to meet its financial needs. But it could review policies on investments with the view to easing stringent requirements and cuts in its operations.

We're in deep fiscal straits and not even the tons of white grain along the shore could sand down this reality for the foreseeable future.

Hillside tidal shift

There's speculation of a few changes in the guard from the old to the new under a different piper. Some of these folks would descend, if not, already.

I'd like to see if the severally beatified Unsinkable Molly Browns could hold unto power. The tidal shift is up to the new titular head. It's a team he should forge to ensure continuity and stability. It's a tough job deciding who goes and stays.

It's a matter of realignment and it is here where the red line is drawn that could translate either way: survival or destruction. Call it reality check!

Minimum wage discussion

We hear sob stories of how another increase in minimum wage would destroy small businesses, jobs or force price hikes of basic goods that returns everything to square one. The debate goes in and out of various quarters. Specifically how it would help resolve poverty. It's an involved issue that also brings up which wage system is best: minimum or living wage?

The minimum gives employees at this level something to look forward to until further notice. It is mired in shallow politics. The second grants employees more income to maintain decent lifestyle, e.g., a house, family car, and disposable income for other family needs like college education for the kids. This too can't be forced given its devastating effects and neither system resolves eradication of poverty.

Even with increase in the minimum wage, many recipients still receive entitlement benefits like food stamps and Medicaid. Some have refused any increase in wages taking preference in the amount of assistance coming from the two programs. Do you blame them? Indeed, many are reliant on Medicaid to cover family health needs as they quiz what happens if the program suffers heavy budgetary cuts in the near term under republican charge in Washington?

If a Republican president comes in cushioned by a GOP majority in the U.S. Congress we could almost guarantee that Obama's signature domestic policy in Obamacare would be repealed. It may be disadvantageous to us but would Congress even listen when its goal is to reduce the national debt and help return health insurance to private hands? It's an issue that merits critical review for it seems we've taken a superficial leap of faith and reliance on a program destined for eventual scrapping.

It's time to retreat and focus on the training and education of our people. A good program on skills acquisition and education would render living in poverty a closed chapter. It prepares, via skills acquisition and education a much more sure footed future. It builds good familial values in the essence of hard work or rugged individualism Therefore the focus should be on training and the education of our people. Statutory increase isn't the answer and history has proven it time and again.

IRAN

From Page 10

the deal. International inspectors still have major questions about Iran's nuclear weapons research, likely never to be answered.

One key to the deal's success will be whether the U.S. and its allies show Tehran that they are serious about enforcing the deal to its letter, that sanctions will snap back if Tehran strays.

It might get lost in all the other drama, but there was a very encouraging sign of U.S. resolve to hold Iran accountable: On Sunday, President Barack Obama slapped new economic sanctions on Iran interests for Tehran's provocative decision to conduct ballistic missile tests that violated a United Nations ban. Those sanctions had been expected and then abruptly delayed, reportedly because Iran had threatened to scuttle the deal to release the Americans who were being held.

Welcome the American hostages home, and remember the cold designs of the dangerous regime that held them.

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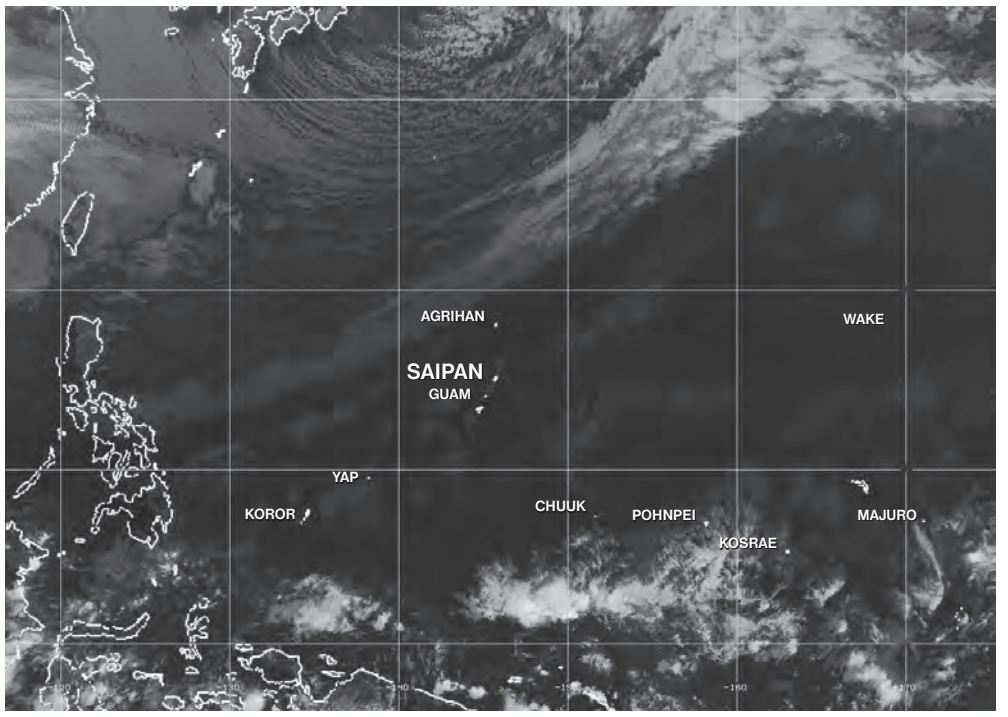
The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼73°	▲85° ▼73°	▲85° ▼74°	▲85° ▼74°	▲85° ▼74°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2016

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward through 25N155E to 17N140E then continues as a shear line to beyond 130E at 13N. Cloudiness, scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are seen along and up to 300 miles northwest of the cold front and up to 100 miles north of the shear line. Converging trade winds are generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms south of Koror and Yap between 1N and 4N from 133E to 139E and south of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae within 100 miles of a line from 2N145E to 2N158E to EQ161E. Widely scattered showers are seen southeast of Majuro east of a line from 7N172E to 1N176E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Showers	▲83	▼77
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Yap	Mostly Sunny	▲87	▼77
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲86	▼79
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼79
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80

Around the Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲80	▼63
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲32	▼13
Hong Kong	Showers	▲66	▼59
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲80	▼66
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲43	▼37
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲67	▼49
Manila	Mostly Sunny	▲89	▼73
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼64
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲72	▼60
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲38	▼27
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲47	▼37
Paris	Sunny	▲41	▼29
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲44	▼25
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲57	▼39
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲50	▼45
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲59	▼48
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲31	▼11
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲51	▼33
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲34	▼24

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

6:36 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet
11:39 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
4:53 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:09 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Sunday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Monday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	3:38 PM	3:52 AM
Friday	4:33 PM	4:48 AM
Saturday	5:28 PM	5:41 AM
Sunday	6:22 PM	6:32 AM
Monday	7:15 PM	7:19 AM

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:30am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2924/183	4:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5038/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA5072/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2924/159	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

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TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

3 charged in Guam for $30M health care fraud

Alicia A.G. Limtiaco, United States Attorney for the Districts of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, announced today that the federal grand jury has indicted Clifford P. "Cliff" Shoemake, Kimberly C. "Casey" Conner, and Nicholas A. "Nick" Shoemake, on one (count of Conspiracy to Commit Health Care Fraud, 10 substantive counts of Health Care Fraud, one count of Conspiracy to Launder Monetary Instruments and Engage in Monetary Transactions, 10 substantive counts of Engaging in Monetary Transactions with Proceeds of Specified Unlawful Activity, and 21 substantive counts of Laundering of Monetary Instruments.

Cliff Shoemake and Casey Conner were part owners in Smart Energy Design, Inc., d/b/a Guam Medical Transport or GMT. Cliff Shoemake served as GMT's president, and Conner served as its vice president. Nick Shoemake is the son of Cliff Shoemake, and served as executive assistant of GMT.

GMT was a corporation engaged in the business of providing non-emergency ambulance transportation services in Guam. Most of GMT's business was providing routine, scheduled ambulance transportation services to and from kidney dialysis clinics for beneficiaries of federal health care benefit programs including Medicare and TriCare.

The indictment alleges that beginning in or about March 2010 and continuing through on or about March 21, 2014, the defendants caused Medicare and TriCare to make payments to GMT based on the submission of false and fraudulent claims for ambulance transportation services. During this time period, GMT submitted claims to Medicare and TriCare totaling approximately $32,735,378.03, which resulted in payments approximating $10,884,964.49.

Medicare covers ambulance transportation services only when provided to a beneficiary whose medical condition at the time of transport is such that ambulance transportation is medically necessary and reasonable. In the absence of an emergency condition, ambulance services are only covered where (a) the patient being transported could not be transported by any other means without endangering the individual's health; or (b) the patient was before, during, and after transportation, bed-confined.

The indictment further alleges it was also part of the conspiracy that the defendants would enrich themselves by transferring and disbursing, and causing the transfer and disbursement of monies fraudulently obtained from federal health care benefit programs from GMT to themselves and others. The defendants used the proceeds of their fraudulent scheme for their own personal use in several ways, including personal travel expenses associated with vacations to Hawaii, Europe, Australia, and Alaska, payments for their personal income taxes, a down payment and closing costs associated with the purchase of a personal residence, personal utility expenses, monthly rental payments on a personal residence, monthly automobile loan payments, and credit card bills for numerous miscellaneous personal expenses. The defendants are scheduled to appear in court for an initial appearance and arraignment on Jan. 26, 2016.

This investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, and the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations. The prosecution is being handled jointly by the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Guam and the United States Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Fraud Section.

Members of the public are reminded that an Indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which time the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. ***(PR)***

Search suspended for Marines missing after helicopters crash

KANEOHE BAY, Hawaii (AP)—Officials on Tuesday suspended their massive search for 12 Marines who were aboard two helicopters that crashed off Hawaii last week.

The around-the-clock effort failed to locate any sign of the 12 service members despite five days of searching by several agencies.

Officials said at a late afternoon news conference that the search would be suspended at sundown and the Marine Corps would transition to "recovery and salvage" efforts. A memorial is tentatively planned for Friday at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay.

"The decision to suspend the search without finding survivors is particularly difficult," said Capt. James Jenkins, chief of staff and acting commander of the Coast Guard 14th District in Honolulu.

The search began late Thursday when a civilian on a beach reported seeing the helicopters flying and then a fireball.

The Marines were alerted when the CH-53E helicopters carrying six crew members each failed to return to their base at Kaneohe Bay following a nighttime training mission. Hours later, a Coast Guard helicopter and C-130 airplane spotted debris 2 1/2 miles (four kilometers) off of Oahu.

The crash was near the north shore, but the search area spanned from the western coast of Oahu to the northeast corner of the island.

The transport helicopters were part of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing at Marine Corps Base Hawaii. Known as Super Stallions, they are the U.S. military's largest helicopter, capable of carrying a light armored vehicle, 16 tons of cargo or a team of combat-equipped Marines, according to a Marine Corps website.

The Coast Guard initially reported that the choppers had collided, but the Marines said later it wasn't yet known if there was a collision. The cause remains under investigation.

The Marine Corps will strive to "discover all of the facts" surrounding the crash, said Brig. Gen. Russell Sanborn, commanding general of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

They will continue the recovery of any debris and "any other remains that may discovered," he said, "so that we can give closure to those families that are still out there that still want that final piece of the puzzle."

All four life rafts from the helicopters were found but they were empty. There was no indication anyone had been on any of the rafts, based on their condition and the lack of any personal effects, the Coast Guard said.

High surf complicated the mission for rescuers during the initial days of the search.

Tinian Liaison Office on Saipan undergoes renovation

In addition to municipal buildings on Tinian, another project of the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan that is progressing nicely is the renovation of the Tinian Liaison Office facility on Saipan.

The residents of Tinian who have to permanently reside on Saipan or travel to and from Saipan for medical treatment that is not available at the Tinian Health Center, are accommodated at the Tinian Liaison Office facility. Without this housing facility, residents of Tinian seeking and requiring medical treatment will have bigger challenges with room and board, transportation, and, most importantly, the medical treatment available only on Saipan. The Tinian Liaison Office, located in Lower Navy Hill, is a critical facility that has needed major renovations for years now.

The renovation began on Oct. 5, 2015, but encountered some delays as a result of Typhoon Soudelor.

Work has since continued with the overall renovation and construction work about 86 percnt complete to date. The project is scheduled to be completed by Feb. 2, 2016 but will likely be completed soon thereafter. Current and future projects would not be possible without the support of the Tinian leadership as well as the Office o fthe Governor, Capital Improvement Project office, and other agencies.

"Si Yu'us Ma'ase to all stakeholders involved in the process of moving this project forward so that this critical facility can be upgraded to provide services to the residents of Tinian who have to leave home to seek medical treatment," said Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas. ***(PR)***

Tinian Liaison Office facility is currently undergoing renovation. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The facility, which houses Tinian residents on medical referral on Saipan or those on Saipan for official government business, is located in Lower Navy Hill.

Nat'l Geographic Society scientist to speak on origins of Chamorros

»Dr. Miguel Vilar is 29thsSpeaker in UOG Presidential Lecture Series

The University of Guam welcomes Dr. Miguel Vilar, project manager and scientific lead for the National Geographic Society's Genographic Project, as the 29th speaker in the UOG Presidential Lecture Series.

Vilar's lecture, entitled "Researching the Origins and Genetic Distinctiveness of Chamorros: A Bi-Parental Analysis" will be held at 5:30pm on Tuesday, Jan. 26, in the College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences (CLASS) Lecture Hall on the UOG Campus.

Vilar

"Dr. Miguel Vilar will provide us with new information about the genetic inheritance of modern day Chamorros in order to better comprehend the origins of our people," said Dr. Robert Underwood, UOG president. "I consider this one of the most important lectures in the calendar of the Presidential Lecture Series at UOG."

The National Geographic Society's Genographic Project is a multi-year genetic anthropology study that aims to map global human migration patterns by collecting and analyzing DNA samples from hundreds of thousands of people from around the world.

The lecture is open to the public. Seating is limited. For more information about the lecture, contact Louise Toves at lmtoves@triton.uog.edu.

About the Lecturer

Vilar is the science manager for National Geographic's Genographic Project. Vilar earned his Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from Haverford College in 1997 and Master of Arts in Journalism from Columbia University in 1999.

After several years of science writing for Popular Science, Science World, and the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park, he returned to school and earned his Master of Science in Biomedical Anthropology, Master of Arts in Anthropology, and Doctorate in Anthropology from Binghamton University, in 2006, 2007 and 2010, respectively. After earning his doctorate, Vilar led several projects across Latin America for the Genographic Project's North America Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

Vilar is a molecular anthropologist and science writer. His fieldwork has taken him to remote places throughout the South Pacific, East Africa, Mesoamerica, and the Caribbean. In the laboratory he researches the modern genetic diversity of human populations from Micronesia, Melanesia, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Miguel publishes in several anthropology and genetics journals, as well as popular science magazines. He also writes the Genographic Project Blog for the National Geographic Society website. ***(PR)***

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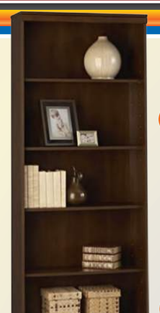

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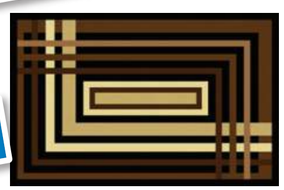

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Business

Economists see more growth for US economy, housing in '16

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A robust U.S. economy and job market, plus low mortgage rates, should help keep the recovery in the new-home market going at a modest pace this year, but a return to pre-housing boom sales and construction levels isn't imminent.

That's the forecast that David Crowe, chief economist for the National Association of Home Builders, delivered Tuesday during a panel of economists at the trade association's latest industry convention in Las Vegas.

And despite the U.S. economy's mixed track record of growth in 2015, Crowe projects that the economy will expand 2.7 percent this year, the strongest gain since before the Great Recession in 2008, as consumer spending continues to grow.

"There are a number of positive indicators out there that make me believe ... this will be a good year for the economy and for housing," Crowe said. "Not only is housing finally driving some of that, housing is finally moving at a much faster pace than the economy."

U.S. homebuilders are entering 2016 feeling better about their sales prospects than they have in years, thanks to rising home prices and gradually improving sales.

New-home sales climbed nearly 15 percent through the first 11 months of last year, while construction of single-family homes hit an eight-year high in November. The trends have helped lift construction hiring: Construction companies added 215,000 jobs last year, a 3.4 percent gain.

Even so, sales and construction have yet to rebound fully from the housing bust nearly a decade ago.

Whether that progress continues this year will depend largely on the U.S. economy continuing to improve.

That's come increasingly into doubt lately. Faltering growth in countries like China, the world's second-largest economy, and financial market turmoil have heightened concerns that the U.S. economy could be in for a stumble.

There aren't any major signs pointing to that, however, argued another panelist, David Berson, chief economist at Nationwide Mutual Insurance's Nationwide Economics.

As wealthy Brazilians snap up Miami real estate, few benefit

MIAMI (AP)—Facing a teetering economy at home, wealthy Brazilians have been pouring money into what they increasingly see as the safest place to invest: South Florida real estate.

So are Argentinians, Colombians, Mexicans, Venezuelans, French and Turks—almost anyone with money to shelter, a direct flight to Miami and a shaky economy to flee.

Their cash has helped drive the latest twist in Miami's ever-evolving transformation—from a 19th century rail stop to a tourist-and-retiree hub to a haven for Cuban refugees to now a harbor for global investors. No American skyline has undergone a more drastic face-lift from foreign cash in the past decade: Luxury condo towers and swanky retailers crowd a downtown once marred by empty lots.

And almost no developer expects the demand to stop.

Yet Miamians as a whole have scarcely benefited from the glitz. Wages have actually dropped for Miami workers in the past year. Area unemployment tops the national average. Miami contains the largest share of renters in the country who devote over 30 percent of their pay to housing—the level the government deems burdensome.

"We're not seeing the benefits of that income being disposed of in the local economy," said Ned Murray, associate director of Florida International University's Metropolitan Center. "That impacts local businesses, and we're losing opportunities to create year-round housing for our workers. They're moving out."

But with its glamorous locale and easy access, Miami real estate offers an asset that's appreciating at a time when other investments have shrunk or turned frighteningly volatile. That's despite being on a stretch of land prone to natural disasters.

"All of the insecurity around the rest of the world only reminds people how important it is to have assets in the United States," said Alicia Cervera Lamadrid, a developer who is leading sales efforts for the planned 57-story Elysee, with condo units starting at $1.65 million and personal wine storage available for residents.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Johnson & Johnson to cut about 3,000 jobs in medical devices

Johnson & Johnson said Tuesday that it plans to cut about 3,000 jobs over the next two years as the health care conglomerate works to restructure its medical devices business. The New Brunswick, New Jersey, company said that amounts to more than 2 percent of its global workforce of around 127,000 people and 4 percent to 6 percent of its employee total in medical devices. The cuts come after a tough year for the healthcare bellwether, which has seen sales of its prescription drugs, devices and consumer medicines squeezed by a weakening global economy and unfavorable currency exchange rates. "These actions recognize the changing needs of the global medical device market," said Gary Pruden, chairman of Johnson & Johnson's medical device unit, in a statement. The restructuring focuses on the company's orthopedics, surgery and cardiovascular businesses. It won't affect consumer medical devices, pharmaceuticals or consumer businesses. ***(AP)***

Insurance customers begin new year with delays

Thousands of health insurance consumers around the country have started the new year dealing with missing ID cards, billing errors and other problems tied to an enrollment surge at the end of 2015. Brokers and insurers in several states told The Associated Press that they've been inundated with complaints about these issues from customers with individual plans and those with coverage through small businesses. Insurance provider Health Care Service Corp., for instance, has been dealing with delays for about 10,000 companies, while billing errors caused bank overdrafts for 3,200 individual customers of a North Carolina insurer. These delays mean that some customers may have to pay for care up front or wait for their insurance cards to arrive before scheduling a doctor's appointment, even though many have technically been covered since Jan. 1. ***(AP)***

Nation

Clash on immigration heads to Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Supreme Court stepped into a boiling political dispute over immigration Tuesday, setting up a likely decision in the middle of a presidential campaign marked by harsh rhetoric about immigrants.

AP

In this Nov. 20, 2015 file photo, Ingrid Vaca, originally of Bolivia speaks during rally for immigration reform in front of the White House in Washington.

The justices agreed to review whether President Barack Obama, acting without congressional approval, has the power to shield from deportation up to 5 million immigrants living in the U.S. illegally and make them eligible to work without fear of being rounded up.

Underscoring the political dimension, the case will be argued in April and decided by late June, about a month before both political parties gather for their nominating conventions.

If Obama prevails against opponents led by Republican governors, there would be roughly seven months left in his presidency to implement plans that would affect the parents of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents, as well as some people who arrived in the United States before they turned 16.

"We are confident that the policies will be upheld as lawful," White House spokeswoman Brandi Hoffine said after the court's announcement Tuesday.

Michigan governor devotes speech to Flint water crisis

LANSING, Mich. (AP)—Only a year ago, Rick Snyder began his second term as Michigan governor promoting the same achievements that had propelled him to victory in 2014: The state was at last in the midst of an economic comeback, and Detroit had emerged from bankruptcy.

With the water crisis gripping Flint now threatening to overshadow nearly everything else he has accomplished, the Republican governor again pledged a fix during his annual State of the State speech Tuesday night.

"We are praying for you, we are working hard for you and we are absolutely committed to taking the right steps to effectively solve this crisis," he said. "To you, the people of Flint, I say tonight as I have before: I am sorry, and I will fix it."

Snyder committed $28 million more in the short term to dealing with the lead contamination that has left Flint residents unable to drink unfiltered tap water. He announced the deployment of roughly 130 more National Guard members to the city and promised to quickly release his emails regarding the crisis that has engulfed his administration with criticism from across the country.

He also revealed his appeal of President Barack Obama's denial of a federal disaster declaration for the area, and his aides pledged that, by the end of the week, officials would visit every household in Flint to ensure they have water filters.

Snyder devoted much of his 49-minute evening address to the GOP-led Legislature to the disaster as hundreds of protesters demonstrated outside the Capitol. Many of his other priorities were shelved from the speech due to the crisis, though he did address the mounting financial problems in Detroit's state-overseen school district. Snyder, whose office is exempt from public-records requests, plans to release his 2014 and 2015 emails on Wednesday.

East Coast, Ohio Valley brace for possible big snowstorm

WASHINGTON (AP)—Tens of millions of Americans from Washington to Boston and the Ohio Valley could be walloped by an end-of-the-week snowstorm, meteorologists say.

Although it's still early, computer forecast models all see a windy, strong slow-moving storm. The big questions are where and how much.

"There's going to be a big storm. Somebody's going to get walloped," said Victor Gensini, a meteorology professor at College of DuPage outside of Chicago, which should be spared. "It does look like it's going to be a doozy."

Rich Otto, lead forecaster at the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center outside of Washington, said some major cities will likely see a foot or more of snow. Other meteorologists talked about 18 inches, two feet and more.

Gensini said the heavy snow is likely because the system will be slow moving. Forecasters see Saturday as the worst day in the East.

Early Tuesday, the Weather Prediction Center said the storm could be historic, but Otto said that may have been going a bit too far.

"Things will change; that's a guarantee," Otto said. "Nothing ever stays the same with these forecasts."

Otto said an upper-level disturbance in the air is moving from the Pacific to the Rockies to the southern plains. It should pass over Texas, hit the Ohio Valley, join with other unstable air and become a nor'easter Friday evening over the Mid Atlantic, moving up the coast on Saturday.

"Since the storm is arriving on a southern track, impacts will include Kentucky, Cincinnati, West Virginia, Northern Virginia into D.C., then Philly," said meteorologist Ryan Maue of the private WeatherBell Analytics.

Asia

Japan FM says Russia key to resolving Syria, N. Korea issues

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's foreign minister pledged Tuesday to continue talks with Russia even though the two countries still lack a World War II peace treaty, saying Moscow is key to resolving international threats from Syria and North Korea.

Fumio Kishida also announced $350 million in new aid to help stabilize Syria and its neighboring countries amid the region's massive refugee crisis, following $810 million in earlier humanitarian support.

Kishida said in a speech in Tokyo that a diplomatic dialogue between Japan and Russia is indispensable, even though a territorial dispute has prevented them from technically ending their World War II hostilities. He said the two sides are seeking to hold summit talks "at the most appropriate time" this year.

Media reports say Prime Minister Shinzo Abe might visit Russia in April for talks with President Vladimir Putin ahead of a Group of Seven leaders' meeting in Japan in May.

"The international community is faced with various challenges, and Russia's constructive role is essential in resolving the problems," Kishida said, citing North Korea, Syria and the threat of terrorism. "In that context, political dialogue, especially at a political level, is indispensable."

Japan and Russia never signed a post-World War II peace treaty because of conflicting claims over islands north of the Japanese island of Hokkaido. The Soviet Union seized the four island groups in 1945.

Abe has sought to make progress on the territorial issue with Russia, but possible plans for a visit by Putin to Japan were put off following the Ukraine conflict and other issues.

Afghan woman has nose cut off by husband

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—A young woman in a remote northern region of Afghanistan had her nose cut off by her husband, officials in the region said on Tuesday.

Fawzia Salimi, a hospital director in Maymana, capital of Faryab province, said 22-year-old Reza Gul was brought in early Monday having lost a great deal of blood.

Gul's husband, 25-year-old Mohammad Khan, has since fled their village. Salimi said the Afghan-Turk Hospital in Maymana was trying to arrange transport for Gul to Turkey for further treatment.

Domestic violence is widespread in Afghanistan, where women are often denied constitutional rights designed to protect them.

Violence has also become somewhat entrenched in Afghan society after 40 years of war, with nearly non-existent mental health care and few options or outlets for a traumatized population.

Hafizullah Fetrat, the head of Fayrab's provincial human rights commission, said violence in the area had risen by at least 30 percent in the past year.

"It's not just in Faryab, it is across the entire north of the country—poverty, high unemployment, ignorance about marriage," he said.

Faryab borders Turkmenistan and is among the poorest regions of Afghanistan, with many people relying on government food handouts. Corruption is also rife, and many residents complaining that officials pilfer the aid.

Over the past year, the Taliban's presence in the region has grown. The militant group has intensified its campaign following the drawdown of the international combat mission in 2014.

The district where Gul's family lives is under Taliban control, said Rahmatullah Turkistani, a member of Fayab's provincial council.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Pakistani police: 2 killed in university attack underway

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistani police say a professor and a student have been killed in an attack by gunmen at a university in the country's northwest. Earlier, the police and army were exchanging gunfire with the attackers and several explosions were heard from the area of the Bacha Khan University in the town of Charsadda, located some 35 kilometers (21 miles) outside the city of Peshawar. Pakistani TV stations are broadcasting footage showing heavy military presence at the university, troops rushing in and people fleeing. Ambulances are at the scene and wounded are being taken to hospital. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. A Taliban attack on a school in Peshawar in December 2014 killed over 150 people, mostly children.

US, S. Korea say NKorea must pay high price for nuclear test

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—U.S. and South Korean officials vowed Wednesday to make North Korea pay a high price for its defiant nuclear test earlier this month that caused worries about advancement in the North's bomb program. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in South Korea on a diplomatic push for tougher sanctions that can force change in the North. Key to those efforts is whether China, the North's last major ally and a veto-wielding U.N. Security Council member, will join in imposing any harsh punishment on the North. "We couldn't agree more on the need for a very clear and very strong international response," Blinken said at the start of a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se. Blinken said Seoul and Washington are working closely in New York with the United Nations Security Council Yun said it is time for the international community to stay united to make North Korea face the consequences for its bomb test. "This is North Korea versus international community," he said.

China accuses detained Swede of endangering state security

BEIJING (AP)—A Swedish co-founder of a human rights group in China was detained because he is suspected of funding activities that endanger state security, Chinese state media said Tuesday. The official Xinhua News Agency said Peter Dahlin collected negative information about China and trained unlicensed lawyers to stir up hostility toward the government. It said he has apologized. "I was engaged in activities in violation of Chinese law while in China and hurt the Chinese government and Chinese people," Xinhua quoted him as saying. "For this, I offer deep apologies." Dahlin's group, the China Urgent Action Working Group, says he was detained on Jan. 3 on his way to Beijing's main airport, where he planned to fly to Thailand.

World

IS acknowledges death of 'Jihadi John' in magazine

AP

This undated image taken from a video posted online by the communications arm of Islamic State group on Sunday, Jan. 3, 2016, purports to show a member of the militant group brandishing a gun and talking to the camera, before he and others appear to kill five men who they accuse of spying for Britain in Syria.

NEW YORK (AP)—The Islamic State group has acknowledged the death of the masked militant known as "Jihadi John," who appeared in several videos depicting the beheadings of Western hostages, in an article in its online English-language magazine Dabiq.

A "eulogizing profile" of Jihadi John appeared in the magazine which was shared online late Tuesday by sympathizers of the Islamic State group. Jihadi John had been identified by the U.S. military as Mohammed Emwazi, a Kuwaiti-born British citizen.

"His harshness towards the kuffar (disbelievers) was manifested through deeds that enraged all the nations, religions, and factions of kufr, the entire world bearing witness to this," said the English-language article which confirmed that Emwazi was killed in a drone strike.

Army Col. Steve Warren, a U.S. military spokesman, said in November that the Army was "reasonably certain" that a drone strike in Syria had killed Emwazi, who spoke in beheading videos with a British accent as he wielded a knife.

Separately, a U.S. official said three drones—two U.S. and one British—targeted the vehicle in which Emwazi was believed to be traveling in Raqqa, the capital of the Islamic State's self-proclaimed caliphate in northern Syria. The official said the U.S. drone fired a Hellfire missile that struck the vehicle.

"Jihadi John" appeared in videos posted online by the Islamic State starting in August 2014 that depicted the beheadings of U.S. journalists Steven Sotloff and James Foley, U.S. aid worker Abdul-Rahman Kassig, British aid workers David Haines and Alan Henning, and Japanese journalist Kenji Goto.

AP Exclusive: Video footage shows Burkina Faso attackers

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP)—Two jihadis can be seen on video standing next to burning cars a little more than an hour after an assault began on a hotel and cafe in Burkina Faso's capital, raising new questions Tuesday about why it took so long for security forces to find and kill the militants blamed for at least 30 deaths.

The video shot by The Associated Press shows one man wearing a tunic and turban, carrying what appears to be a Kalashnikov rifle around 8:45 p.m., a little over an hour after they first attacked the Cappuccino Cafe. A second armed man can be seen wearing a large vest, and they are later joined by a third man with a pale scarf on his head. Explosions can be heard in the distance.

On Tuesday, authorities in Burkina Faso also released new details on how they ultimately killed the three men who were part of the North Africa branch of al-Qaida, working in connection with Algerian jihadi Moktar Belmoktar and his forces. Officials acknowledged though that it was more than four hours after the attack began before security forces tried to enter the hotel.

In the darkness of night and panic amid gunfire, some witnesses late Friday mistakenly identified at least two of the jihadis as women, and some even said they believed there was a fourth attacker. Burkina Faso's Security Minister Simon Compaore said Tuesday that several people have been detained and questioned but he declined to give further details, citing the ongoing investigation.

Report: Kurdish forces deliberately destroy Arab villages

IRBIL, Iraq (AP)—Iraqi Kurdish forces are deliberately destroying Arab villages under their control, according to an Amnesty International report released on Wednesday. The human rights group said these actions could amount to war crimes.

Kurdish forces have bulldozed, blown up and burned down thousands of homes in Arab villages recaptured from the Islamic State group, the report said.

"The forced displacement of civilians and the deliberate destruction of homes and property without military justification may amount to war crimes," said Donatella Rovera of Amnesty International in a statement.

Rovera, who carried out the field research for the report, said the group also found that Arab civilians were barred from returning to their villages by Kurdish forces. The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq has said civilians are being prevented from returning to their homes for their own safety, citing the dangers of explosive booby-traps and homemade bombs that IS often leaves behind when it retreats.

Focus

By ZEINA KARAM
and PHILIP ISSA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

In this Monday, Jan. 11, 2016 file photo, people wait to leave the besieged town of Madaya, northwest of Damascus, Syria. In the besieged eastern city of Deir el-Zour, supplies are running so short that people are selling their gold and other property for food or an exit permit allowing them to escape both the government and Islamic State militants who rule the region of Syria.

In besieged Syrian city, hungry residents sell gold for food

BEIRUT (AP)—In Syria's eastern city of Deir el-Zour, supplies are running so short that desperate residents are selling their gold, valuables and even their homes for food or an exit permit allowing them to escape a siege by both government troops and Islamic State militants.

The extremists have blockaded government-held areas of the city for over a year, and some of its 200,000 residents are slowly starving—while troops and militias supporting President Bashar Assad exploit their suffering.

While international attention was focused recently on Madaya—a rebel-held town surrounded by pro-Assad troops near the capital of Damascus—the United Nations and aid agencies say another catastrophe is unfolding in Deir el-Zour.

The civil war has transformed a once oil-rich city into a place where even something as simple as making tea is a struggle, according to residents who have fled, because of severe shortages of food, water and fuel.

Many people live on bread and water—and there are long waits for both. Taps are shut off for days at a time, and the water that flows out for only a few hours is brackish. The city hasn't had electricity for over 10 months, with little fuel available for generators and water pumps.

The U.N. warned last week that living conditions have deteriorated significantly in Deir el-Zour. Students are frequently absent from school because of malnutrition. The only remaining civilian hospital needs drugs and other supplies, as well as staff.

Unverified reports cited up to 20 malnutrition deaths, the U.N. said in its report. But Ali al-Rahbi, spokesman for the Justice for Life Observatory for Deir el-Zour, said his group documented 27 deaths.

The Islamic State group surrounds Deir el-Zour and won't let people and supplies in by land; the Syrian government, which controls part of the city and its airport, won't allow supplies to be brought in by air or let its people out.

The city, about 450 kilometers (280 miles) northeast of Damascus, is divided roughly along the Euphrates River, with the Islamic State group on the eastern side and the Syrian government on the western side, although IS controls some territory on the western bank as well.

Deir el-Zour is the largest of about 15 besieged communities in Syria, cutting off about 400,000 people from aid. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said both the Syrian government and the rebels are committing war crimes by deliberately starving civilians. Reports of starvation in Madaya prompted an international outcry, and two aid convoys last week delivered humanitarian aid to civilians there.

So far, no such aid is forthcoming to Deir el-Zour.

The city recently has been the focus of renewed efforts by Islamic State militants to retake it. An offensive over the weekend captured new areas from government forces, killing over 250 troops and civilians, and capturing hundreds.

The offensive "is putting thousands of people in the line of fire," said U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq.

How the city came to be under such a punishing siege from both sides only makes sense in the perverse circumstances of Syria's civil war, now in its fifth year.

Deir el-Zour lies near the Iraqi border, deep in Islamic State territory, but the government has been able to defend its military airport on the outskirts, allowing it to maintain its city's fortifications. It also controls four large neighborhoods that are home to many internally displaced people, including women and children.

Because the airport is so close to the front line, only helicopters have been able to land there since September, the U.N.'s Haq said.

The government troops in the city are regularly reinforced and supported by Russian and Syrian air power. Rather than fight them, the IS militants imposed a blockade in January 2015. Residents say the siege grew worse in March when the government stopped anyone from leaving Deir el-Zour without permission.

IS has prevented people from entering government-held areas, but a few months ago, it began allowing people to leave for other IS-held areas, although it subjected them to interrogation and harassment—and in some cases, it confiscated their documents.

The extremists then closed that window, banning anyone from leaving.

Residents say the government has its own reasons for maintaining the siege-within-a-siege and carefully controlling the flow of goods and people through the military airport: The residents have effectively become human shields against an IS attack. In addition, the government can extract money from them by raising the price of food or taking huge bribes in return for permits to leave.

Many residents wonder if an IS takeover would bring much-needed supplies of food.

"My father told me exactly, 'My beard is long now, and my stomach is empty. Let them (the militants) in if it is going to let food into the city,'" said Karam Alhamad, a Deir el-Zour native who escaped in September but left his parents behind. It took him six months to find someone who could arrange his exit permit.

But Haq said that following the IS attacks on Sunday, the U.N. has received credible reports of the "execution and abduction/detention of civilians," including those believed to have been smuggling in food.

International organizations have been able to fly in only a limited amount of aid through the military airport, where it passed through government hands before reaching the population, if at all.

Any aid typically goes to army officers and their allies, who resell it on the black market, al-Rahbi said by phone from Turkey.

"The regime is operating a war economy and allows its officers to control humanitarian aid to the city," he added.

Last week, Russia dropped 22 metric tons of relief supplies into Deir el-Zour, but activists said government-affiliated vehicles immediately moved in. Alhamad said security forces collected all the supplies to sell them at the market for the prices they wanted.

A resident who identified himself as Bahaa said he lost more than 14 kilograms (33 pounds) during 11 months in the city and escaped in November to Gazientep in southern Turkey weighing only 55 kilograms (121 pounds).

"My health now is much better than it was, but I'm still suffering psychologically. A lot," he said by phone.

The man, who did not give his real name because he feared for reprisals against relatives left behind, said he paid 250,000 Syrian pounds (over $600) in bribes to receive permission to fly out. It was too expensive to bring his whole family.

"We sold our gold" to raise the money for the bribes, he said. "Other families have sold their homes."

Bahaa's house is on the IS-held side of the city. When the militants took over, the family fled to the government-held side, where they rented an apartment.

"We don't know what has happened to our home," he said.

A resident named Mustafa, who also spoke on condition his full name not be revealed for fear of reprisals, said he managed to flee in October to the Islamic State group's de facto capital of Raqqa, then made it to Turkey. From there, he took the perilous sea route to Europe and has resettled in Austria.

"I thank God every day that I was able to get out," Mustafa said, adding that his three children fell ill and one began refusing food and drink. "I couldn't bear it any longer. There was no one to help. No doctors, no medicine, no nothing."

Mustafa said he sold his apartment "and bribed so many people, I forgot how many."

Environment

Pesticide is threat to bees, EPA says

By GEOFFREY MOHAN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

An insecticide widely used on grains, vegetables, fruit and other crops nationwide threatens honeybees, federal environmental regulators said in a decision that could lend impetus to efforts to ban the chemical.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Wednesday that imidacloprid, a nicotine-imitating chemical found in at least 188 farm and household products in California, "potentially poses risk to hives when the pesticide comes in contact with certain crops that attract pollinators."

The EPA's decision was prompted by increasing concern that the chemicals might be contributing to the sudden collapse of commercial honey bee colonies over the last decade.

Those bees pollinate crucial food crops and contribute about $14 billion in value to the agricultural economy nationwide.

This is the first of four risk assessments conducted by the EPA on the class of pesticides known as neonicotinoids. The rest are slated for completion by the end of the year, after which the agency could tighten controls over the insecticides.

California already prohibits use of the chemical on almonds and limits its application for other crops during bloom periods when bees are most likely to be present.

"Clearly, as a result of this, there might be more restrictions coming," said Charlotte Fadipe, spokeswoman for the California Department of Pesticide Regulation.

California's almond crop, valued at about $7 billion, is completely dependent on nearly 1 million commercial hives brought in to pollinate about 870,000 acres of trees. Other crops that depend strongly on commercial honeybee colonies include oranges and grapefruits, blueberries, cherries, alfalfa, apples, avocados, cucumbers, onions, cantaloupe, cranberries, pumpkins and sunflowers.

California farmers applied nearly 144 tons of the chemical, originally manufactured by Bayer CropScience, on more than 1.5 million acres in 2013, the last year for which complete data were available, according to the state Department of Pesticide Regulation. The top users were wine grape growers, which applied 30 tons of it to about 240,000 acres in 2013, according to the state agency. Growers of table and raisin grapes, tomatoes for processing, oranges and cotton also were among the heaviest agricultural users, according to the agency.

The single biggest user, however, was the predominantly urban structural pest control industry, which applied nearly 37 tons, according to the agency.

Several studies have linked high levels of neonicotinoids to decreased foraging, failures of queen bees, breakdowns in hive communication and other colony-threatening phenomena. Last year, however, a study suggested that exposure to levels of the pesticide expected on most farms would pose no significant negative effects on bee colonies.

Many factors have been blamed for the bee die-offs: exposure to multiple pesticides, poor hive management practices and natural pathogens such as mites and viruses. Although full-scale colony collapses have largely abated over the last several years, bees are continuing to die at a higher-than-normal rate. The USDA last year reported winter colony losses of about 23 percent, based on a survey of beekeepers. A winter decline of about 19 percent is considered normal.

The EPA and its research partners weighed evidence from several hundred scientific studies before concluding that chemical traces of more than 25 parts per billion on plants probably will harm bees.

Last year, the agency halted approval of any new outdoor uses of neonicotinoid pesticides until it completes a full risk assessment. It also has proposed banning use of any pesticide found to be toxic to bees while crops are in bloom and commercial colonies are present.

Bayer CropScience said the EPA's assessment "appears to overestimate the potential for harmful exposures in certain crops, such as citrus and cotton, while ignoring the important benefits these products provide and management practices to protect bees."

The company added that it hoped the agency further considers "the best available science, as well as a proper understanding of modern pest management practices."

Pesticide industry advocates said it was premature to talk about a ban on the chemical.

"I think there's a lot more work to be done, but we're pretty confident that the product is ultimately going to be found safe either as registered or with potentially any mitigation measures that need to be added," said Renee Pinel, president of the Western Plant Health Association in Sacramento, Calif..

The Center for Biological Diversity, an environmental advocacy group, chided EPA for not broadening its investigation beyond the honey bee, to the more than 4,000 wild bee species, and to other pollinators, including butterflies and bats.

"You can't claim to do a 'pollinator risk assessment' and really only look at one pollinator, the honeybee," said Lori Ann Burd, environmental health director of the group. "That's not only cheating on the purpose of this work but also cheating the native bees, birds, butterflies and other species threatened by this pesticide."

Protections rejected for wolf in decline

By WILLIAM YARDLEY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

SEATTLE—For more than two decades, conservation groups have argued that a wolf and the rainforest in southeast Alaska where it lives are at risk.

While the groups have won strong restrictions on logging of the Tongass National Forest, the nation's largest, they have been denied in their efforts to win federal protection for the wolf.

This week, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service denied them again: The agency determined that the wolf, known as the Alexander Archipelago wolf, should not be listed as an endangered or threatened species.

While the government agreed with conservationists that the wolf is declining in parts of its range and that loss of its habitat from logging is playing a role in that decline, it said the overall population of the wolf appears to be healthy.

"Although the Alexander Archipelago wolf faces several stressors throughout its range related to wolf harvest, timber harvest, road development, and climate-related events in southeast Alaska and coastal British Columbia, the best available information indicates that populations of the wolf in most of its range are likely stable," the Fish and Wildlife Service announced Tuesday.

Named for a collection of remote islands, the wolf actually ranges across much of heavily forested mainland southeast Alaska and the coast of British Columbia in Canada. Conservationists pressing for its protection have focused on wolves in the archipelago, which includes on Prince of Wales Island, an expanse of nearly 2,600 square miles with about 6,000 people.

Part of Prince of Wales is being logged under one of the largest timber sales in the Tongass in two decades, and estimates say the island could now have as few as 50 wolves, down from about 300 two decades ago. Logging can also reduce habitat for deer, a critical food source for the wolves.

Conservationists built part of their argument on scientific evidence showing that wolves on the islands — an area the government calls "GMU 2," for Game Management Unit 2 — are genetically distinct from those roaming the mainland. The government agreed there are differences but said they were not strong enough to warrant listing the island wolves as a distinct species.

The best available genetic data "do not indicate that the GMU 2 population harbors significant adaptive variation, which is supported further by the fact that the GMU 2 population is not persisting in an unusual or unique ecological setting," the government concluded.

Bruce Dale, the director of the division of wildlife within the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, which argued against a listing, said the state was committed to protecting the wolf through improved forest management and hunting practices and other means. Despite the declines, he said wolves and deer on the islands remain abundant relative to other parts of the range.

"That doesn't mean they weren't more abundant before," he said.

The decision was a victory for the region's remaining timber industry. Only one large sawmill remains on Prince of Wales Island.

With Sincere Gratitude

†Vicente Taitingfong Camacho

FOR ALL YOUR PRAYERS and being with us throughout this difficult time in our lives, *Thank You* very much.

TO ALL WHO HAVE HELPED US IN ANY and EVERY WAY, UN DANGKULU NA SI YU'US MA'ASE.

We are truly overwhelmed and will always treasure, in our hearts, ALL your kind gestures, generosity, words of comfort, unending love and moral support you ALL have given to us.

Rita Duenas Camacho
Lillian, Norbert & Elisa and Julie & Hiram
Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren

Life & Style

Calls for boycott over diversity throw Oscars into turmoil

NEW YORK (AP)—Growing calls for a boycott of the Academy Awards over the lack of diversity among this year's Oscar nominees are forcing stars to choose sides and threatening to throw the movie industry's biggest night of the year into turmoil.

The backlash over the second straight year of all-white acting nominees is also putting heavy pressure on the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences to diversify its overwhelmingly white male membership.

The furor grew on Tuesday when the Rev. Al Sharpton said he would lead a campaign encouraging people not to watch the Feb. 28 telecast. On Monday, Spike Lee, this year's Oscar honoree for lifetime achievement, and Jada Pinkett Smith announced they will boycott the ceremony in protest.

Academy president Cheryl Boone Isaacs, who has led efforts to diversify the academy, responded late Monday evening with a forceful statement saying that those previous measures weren't enough.

Isaacs, the academy's first African American president, said that "it's time for big changes" and that she will review membership recruiting to bring about "much-need diversity" in the academy's ranks.

At a Los Angeles gala honoring Boone Isaacs on Monday night, actor David Oyelowo—who was famously snubbed last year for his performance as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in "Selma"—expressed frustration with the academy.

AP

In this Monday, Jan. 18, 2016 photo, Comedian Chris Rock speaks during an event celebrating the life and legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. at the Riverside Church in New York.

"This institution doesn't reflect its president and it doesn't reflect this room," Oyelowo said. "I am an academy member and it doesn't reflect me and it doesn't reflect this nation."

Other stars began weighing in. George Clooney, in comments to Variety, said that after earlier progress by the industry, "you feel like we're moving in the wrong direction." He noted that movies like "Creed," ''Straight Outta Compton," ''Beasts of No Nation" and "Concussion" may have deserved more attention from the academy.

"But honestly, there should be more opportunity than that," Clooney said. "There should be 20 or 30 or 40 films of the quality that people would consider for the Oscars. By the way, we're talking about African Americans. For Hispanics, it's even worse. We need to get better at this. We used to be better at it."

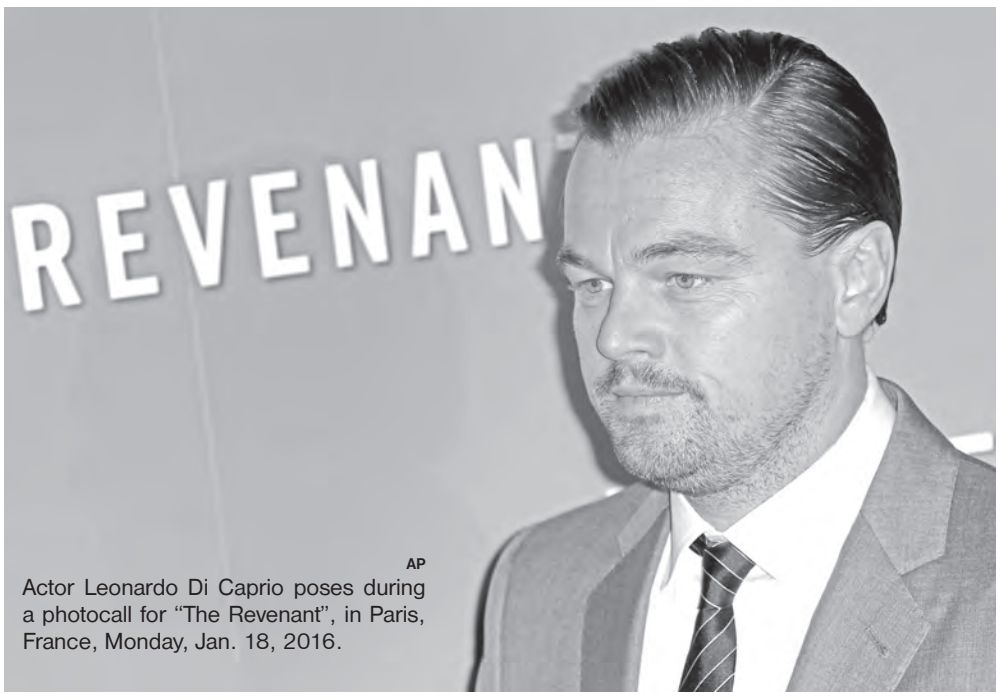
A 2012 Los Angeles Times study found that the academy was 94 percent white and 77 percent male.

UCLA's latest annual Hollywood Diversity Report concluded that women and minorities are substantially underrepresented in front of and behind the camera, even while audiences show a strong desire for films with diverse casts. Hispanics and African Americans go to the movies more often than whites do.

UCLA surveyed film and TV executives and found that 96 percent are white.

In his comments Monday, Lee said the Oscars' problems ultimately reside with "the gate keepers" who have the power to green-light projects.

Box office top 20: 'Ride Along 2' and 'The Revenant' on top



AP

Actor Leonardo Di Caprio poses during a photocall for "The Revenant", in Paris, France, Monday, Jan. 18, 2016.

NEW YORK (AP)—"Ride Along 2" finally dethroned "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend, taking in $41 million in its four-day debut.

That was less than the 2014 original made over the same weekend ($48.6 million), but the Kevin Hart-Ice Cube comedy still put an end to the monthlong reign of "The Force Awakens." J.J. Abrams' blockbuster slid to third with $33 million in its fifth weekend, bringing its record domestic gross to $859 million, according to final studio figures Tuesday.

Following its leading 12 Oscar nominations, Alejandro Inarritu's frontier saga "The Revenant" continued to outperform expectations in its second week of wide release. It took in $37.5 million, bringing its cumulative haul to $95.7 million.

Michael Bay's "13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers Of Benghazi" failed to make a large impact, earning $19.2 million in its debut.

The top 20 movies at U.S. and Canadian theaters Friday through Monday, followed by distribution studio, gross, number of theater locations, average receipts per location, total gross and number of weeks in release, as compiled Tuesday by Rentrak:

1. **"Ride Along 2,"** Universal, $41,006,705, 3,175 locations, $12,915 average, $41,006,705, 1 week.
2. **"The Revenant,"** 20th Century Fox, $37,528,219, 3,559 locations, $10,545 average, $95,702,988, 4 weeks.
3. **"Star Wars: The Force Awakens,"** Disney, $33,020,265, 3,822 locations, $8,640 average, $858,953,106, 5 weeks.
4. **"13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers Of Benghazi,"** Paramount, $19,224,408, 2,389 locations, $8,047 average, $19,224,408, 1 week.
5. **"Daddy's Home,"** Paramount, $11,902,133, 3,322 locations, $3,583 average, $131,858,235, 4 weeks.
6. **"Norm of the North,"** Lionsgate, $9,375,822, 2,411 locations, $3,889 average, $9,375,822, 1 week.
7. **"The Forest,"** Focus Features, $6,980,549, 2,509 locations, $2,782 average, $22,314,183, 2 weeks.
8. **"The Big Short,"** Paramount, $6,439,541, 1,765 locations, $3,648 average, $51,760,423, 6 weeks.
9. **"Sisters,"** Universal, $5,481,810, 2,313 locations, $2,370 average, $81,915,440, 5 weeks.
10. **"Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip,"** 20th Century Fox, $4,336,322, 2,221 locations, $1,952 average, $81,049,347, 5 weeks.
11. **"The Hateful Eight,"** The Weinstein Company, $4,328,579, 2,385 locations, $1,815 average, $48,477,070, 4 weeks.
12. **"Joy,"** 20th Century Fox, $3,546,256, 1,796 locations, $1,975 average, $52,196,524, 4 weeks.
13. **"MET Opera: The Pearl Fishers,"** Fathom Events, $2,200,000, 900 locations, $2,444 average, $2,200,000, 1 week.
14. **"Brooklyn,"** Fox Searchlight, $2,179,998, 687 locations, $3,173 average, $25,129,611, 11 week.
15. **"Spotlight,"** Open Road, $2,072,165, 985 locations, $2,104 average, $31,045,328, 11 week.
16. **"Carol,"** The Weinstein Company, $1,758,492, 790 locations, $2,226 average, $9,454,346, 9 weeks.
17. **"The Good Dinosaur,"** Disney, $1,524,177, 812 locations, $1,877 average, $119,317,790, 8 weeks.
18. **"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2,"** Lionsgate, $1,420,716, 797 locations, $1,783 average, $279,599,584, 9 weeks.
19. **"Creed,"** Warner Bros., $1,400,052, 878 locations, $1,595 average, $107,564,655, 8 weeks.
20. **"Concussion,"** Sony, $1,202,805, 1,041 locations, $1,155 average, $33,247,035, 4 weeks.

Italian director Ettore Scola dead at 84

ROME (AP)—Ettore Scola, one of the last greats of Italian film, has died at age 84.

RAI state radio and the ANSA news agency say Scola died late Tuesday at a Rome hospital after falling ill on Sunday.

Scola, who started out as a screenwriter, won best director in 1976 at the Cannes Film Festival for "Brutti, Sporchi, Cattivi" ("Ugly, Dirty and Bad").

But he was perhaps best known for "We All Loved Each Other So Much," his 1977 tableau about post-war Italy, and the Oscar-nominated "A Special Day" featuring Marcello Mastroianni and Sophia Loren as neighbors who meet during Hitler's visit to Italy in 1938.

Premier Matteo Renzi said Scola had an incomparable way of reading Italian society and said in a tweet that his death "leaves an enormous hole in Italian culture."

AP

In this photo taken Sunday, Oct. 18, 2015, film director Ettore Scola poses on the red carpet at Rome's Film Festival, in Rome. Scola died in Rome on Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2016.

Oscar winner Jamie Foxx helps rescue driver from vehicle

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP)—Oscar-winning actor Jamie Foxx has played super villains and antiheroes on screen. The role of super hero he apparently saved for real life.

Foxx and the victim's father, who met and talked Tuesday, said that Foxx and one other person pulled a man from his burning truck moments before it became engulfed in flames near Foxx's Southern California home.

The California Highway Patrol said the pickup went off the road in unincorporated Ventura County then went into a ditch, rolling over multiple times and becoming engulfed in flames with a male driver trapped inside.

Foxx said he heard the crash from his house, called 911, and ran to the scene. He said another man, an off-duty paramedic who was driving by, had large EMT scissors that the two used to break the truck's window, cut the man's seatbelt and pull him out.

Foxx said "within five seconds" the truck went up in flames.

Foxx said he told the man, "You've got to help me get you out, because I don't want to have to leave you. You've got angels around you."

"I don't look at it as heroic," Foxx told a group of reporters after meeting with Brad Kyle, the father of the 32-year-old victim Brett Kyle. "I just look at it like, you know, you just had to do something. And it all just worked out."

AP

In this Nov. 1, 2015 file photo, Jamie Foxx presents the Hollywood actor award at the Hollywood Film Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. Foxx has played super villains and antiheroes on screen.

Brad Kyle said he had been shown surveillance video of the crash scene, and he saw several cars passing by without helping.

"I just kept watching it and going 'My god, my god, he didn't have to do a thing,' " Kyle said, breaking into tears as he spoke. "I think we all hope that we can do something when the time is there. But the question is, do we act or do we fear for our own life? He did not."

Brett Kyle has broken bones and a punctured lung, but he is expected to survive.

The CHP couldn't confirm Foxx's involvement, but the agency did say two witnesses helped extricate the driver, giving similar details to Foxx's account. His role in the rescue was first reported by celebrity website TMZ.

The name of the paramedic who stopped and helped was not immediately available.

Foxx, who won an Academy Award for playing Ray Charles in 2004's "Ray," played the villain Electro in 2014's "The Amazing Spider-Man 2" and the title renegade slave in 2012's "Django Unchained."

Loretta Lynn: Feeling 'great' at 83, no reason to retire

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Loretta Lynn's new record, her first studio album in more than a decade, likely won't be her last.

"I've got a whole houseful of kids and grandkids, and I'm doing a lot of this for them," Lynn said Tuesday.

She plans to keep working "for a long time," she said. "I feel great. I thank God every day that I'm in good condition."

Lynn credits a lifelong abstinence from smoking and drinking. But there's one trademark indulgence she won't give up: The elaborately embellished dresses she wears in concerts.

"I wouldn't go out on the stage without my gowns for nothing," Lynn said, smiling. "They're heavy but, hey, work's not easy."

The country music legend, whose early life and career were dramatized in the 1980 movie "Coal Miner's Daughter," is the subject of a PBS "American Masters" documentary, "Loretta Lynn: Still a Mountain Girl."

Its March 4 airdate coincides with the release of "Full Circle," which includes new songs and covers of previously recorded Lynn tunes including "Fist City" and "Whispering Sea."

"I think my fans will be happy" with the mix of material, Lynn predicted, speaking to a TV critics' meeting by satellite from Nashville, Tennessee.

The documentary includes interviews with Jack White, who produced Lynn's last studio album, "Van Lear Rose," in 2004; Sissy Spacek, who played Lynn in "Coal Miner's Daughter"; Garth Brooks; Trisha Yearwood; and Miranda Lambert.

"Some of our favorite moments were with Garth and Trisha ... because they have a personal relationship with Loretta," producer Elizabeth Trojian said.

White offered "extraordinary insights" into how Lynn writes songs, fellow producer Elliott Halpern said.

"She takes her life and can make poetry out of it," Trojian said. "It's so beautiful and simple, and yet the most powerful work."

Lynn, who cited her children as her proudest achievement, said she remembers how often her career separated her from them.

"That was the worst part about my singing, was leaving my kids. It was really hard and I would try to take them when I could," she said.

Her new album was produced by Patsy Lynn Russell, her daughter, and John Carter Cash, the son of Johnny Cash.

Stevie Wonder, Pearl Jam, Nick Jonas on tap for Jazz Fest

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Stevie Wonder, Pearl Jam and Neil Young are among those returning to entertain fans at this year's New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, while Nick Jonas, Maxwell, Beck, Snoop Dogg and the Red Hot Chili Peppers are making their festival debut.

Festival organizer Quint Davis said Tuesday those artists are just the tip of the iceberg for music fans awaiting the festival, which showcases and celebrates traditional and contemporary American music. Davis unveiled the list of artists scheduled for the 2016 event, to be held at the Fair Grounds on the weekends of April 22-24 and April 28-May 1.

He said the mix of artists scheduled reflects New Orleans' eclectic and unique energy.

"It's blues, gospel, R&B, rock and jazz in all its forms, Cajun, zydeco and more. It's who we are as a city and as a people and that's our festival," Davis said in an interview.

Wonder last played the Jazz Fest in 2008, while Young performed in 2009. Pearl Jam's previous appearance was in 2010.

Davis said the lineup has a wider range of artistic depth and variety than is typically available at most other festivals.

"We've grown to at having at least one of the greatest artists in the world in those genres on every stage, every day. It used to be, we'd have maybe one on every weekend," he said. "We know over the last number of years since Katrina that we have set the bar for talent really high and that bar gets higher every year. Our challenge is to make sure next year is even better."

AP

In this May 2, 2008 file photo, Stevie Wonder performs during the 2008 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival in New Orleans.

Other artists highlighting the schedule include Julio Iglesias, Lauryn Hill, Steely Dan, My Morning Jacket, Van Morrison, J. Cole, Flo Rida, Elvis Costello and The Isley Brothers.

The nationally recognized talent makes up about 20 percent of the lineup. The rest consists of New Orleans- and Louisiana-based acts including Dr. John, Irma Thomas, Trombone Shorty and Orleans Avenue, Mystikal, BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet, Galactic, Terence Blanchard's E-Collective, Rockin' Dopsie & the Zydeco Twisters and Jon Batiste, now the bandleader for "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," who's coming with his band Stay Human.

Couple's future grows murkier after man has second thoughts

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend, "Jimmy," and I have been together for two years. After about four months, out of necessity we moved in together and it was great.

Not long afterward I got a job two hours away. Since I moved, we get to see each other only every two or three weeks. The separation has been tough, but when we're together, everything is perfect and all is right with the world. I feel we were fated to be together.

Before the move, Jimmy and I often talked about marriage, and although I am not crazy about it, I knew it meant a lot to him, so I proposed (ring and all). He initially said yes, then sort of asked me to take back my proposal. Since then, he has been avoiding all discussions about our future, and I don't know what to do.

I'm willing to quit my job and go back to be with him, but I'm scared he's going to get cold feet. Obviously, I'm hopelessly in love with him, but now I'm feeling lost and confused.

HOURS APART IN THE SOUTH

DEAR HOURS APART: Please allow me to offer some clarity. Do not quit your job because if you do, you may find yourself not only without a job but also without a place to stay.

When someone (man or woman) asks that a proposal be rescinded, it usually means the person feels he or she may have jumped the gun by saying yes. Jimmy is avoiding all discussion about your future because he doesn't want one, and he's afraid to say it directly because he knows it will hurt your feelings.

For your own sake, have an honest conversation with him about this. It may be painful, but it will be better than living in limbo the way you are. As the saying goes, "When a door closes, another one opens."

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Last Friday was Grandparents' Day at my kids' preschool. My parents attended and were well-behaved for the most part, but then my mother made a faux pas. She asked one of the directors when her baby was due. Well, Abby, the woman isn't pregnant.

When I picked up my kids, I had no idea what had happened. The director was having a conversation with one of the teachers when I walked in, so as usual I smiled and waved as I walked by. I did sense something was off when she didn't respond, but I figured she was preoccupied. When we met my parents for dinner, my mother told me what happened.

I am mortified. I managed to make it out of the preschool this morning without crossing paths with the director, but I'll be seeing this woman for the next couple of years. What, if anything, do I say to her?

HORRIFIED IN MICHIGAN

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR HORRIFIED: You did nothing wrong, so stop avoiding the woman and behave as you usually do. IF you notice that she treats you differently, all you should say is: "I heard what happened with my mother, and I'd like to apologize for her behavior. As you can see, she sometimes puts her foot in her mouth, but we love her anyway."

■■■

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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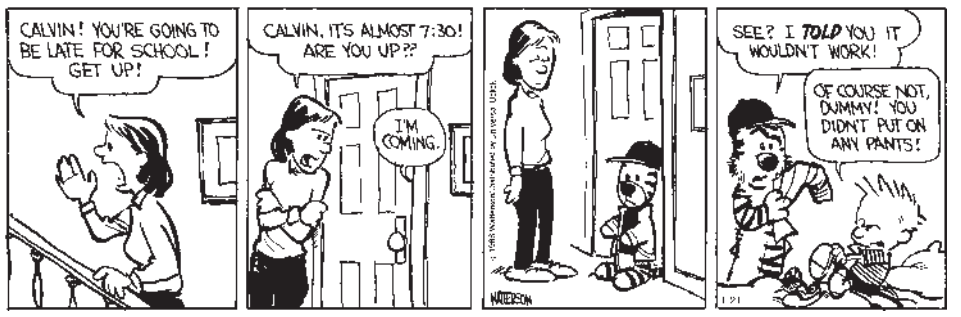
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

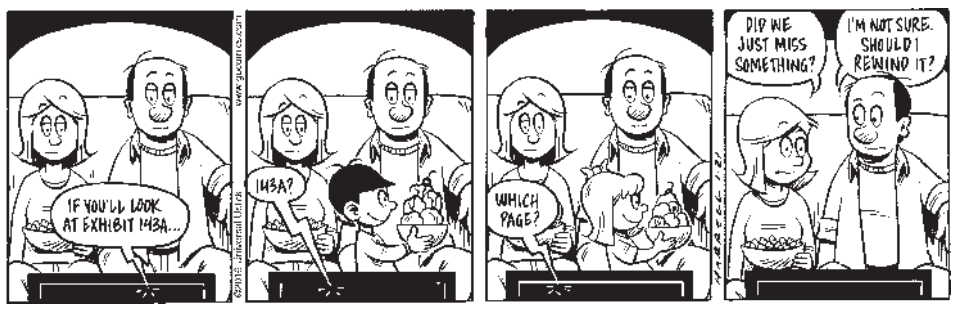

CALVIN! YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE FOR SCHOOL! GET UP!
CALVIN, IT'S ALMOST 7:30! ARE YOU UP??
I'M COMING.
SEE? I TOLD YOU IT WOULDN'T WORK!
OF COURSE NOT, DUMMY! YOU DIDN'T PUT ON ANY PANTS!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

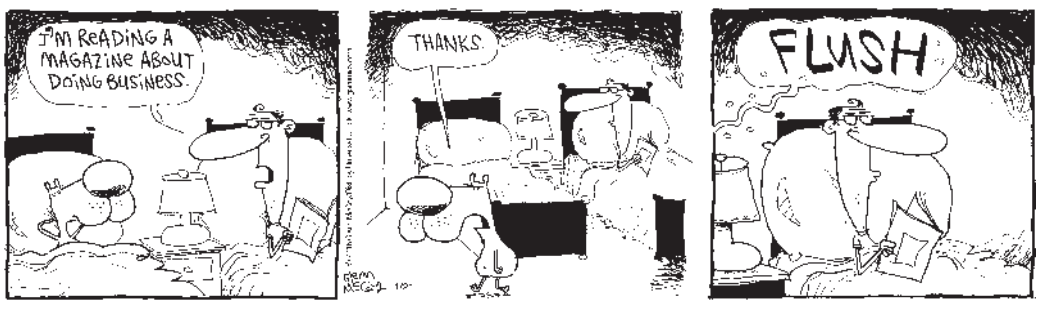
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Butter squares
5 Dog tail motion
8 Tokyo sashes
12 Brawl
13 Laid up
14 Zilch
15 "Coffee, Tea —?"
16 Trio after R
17 Huge number
18 Bagel seed
20 Vermont trees
22 Goat's plaint
23 Susan of "L.A. Law"
24 Pale-faced
27 "Chattanooga —"
32 Dove talk
33 Yank's foe
34 Hooter
35 Folks from Indiana
38 Duck's home
39 "Viva — Vegas"
40 La-la lead-in
42 Mystery
45 Fluffy feline
49 Theater section
50 Gomer Pyle's rank (Abbr.)
52 Mine samples
53 List-ending abbr.
54 Costa del —
55 Copenhagen native
56 Oodles
57 Before
58 "M*A*S*H" star

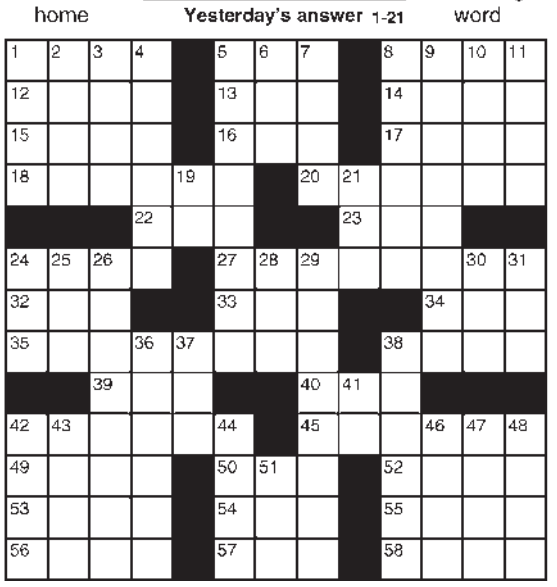
DOWN

1 Experts
2 Suffix with "billion"
3 Male turkeys
4 Hot and humid
5 Smarty-pants
6 Flight stat
7 Morose
8 How some artists work
9 Flamboyant advertising
10 Notion (Fr.)
11 Log cutters
19 Pa's mate
21 Hubbub
24 Frau's "Oh!"
25 Michigan's — Canals
26 Gangster
28 LBJ beagle
29 Roadblock
30 Possess
31 Like fossils
36 With wisdom
37 Doctrine
38 Asian temple
41 ICU worker
42 1st grader's sch.
43 The "N" of N.B.
44 Church area
46 Spoken
47 Cleave
48 On the briny
51 Gift tag word

Solution time: 24 mins.

C	O	M	B		J	A	R		A	S	S	T
A	R	I	A		I	D	A		C	A	K	E
S	A	I	I	N	G	F	R		O	I	I	N
A	N	K	L	E			E	G	R	E	S	S
			E	D	G	Y		E	N	S		
B	U	S	Y		L	O	O	N		M	A	W
A	K	A		V	O	D	K	A		A	N	O
G	E	L		E	W	E	R		G	N	A	W
		T	O	E		L	A	R	A			
B	L	I	M	P	S			C	P	O	N	E
R	U	N	E		S	A	L	A	D	B	A	R
I	B	E	G		N	R	A		E	O	N	S
M	F	S	A		S	T	Y		N	F	A	T

Yesterday's answer 1-21



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Booboo Stewart, 22; Ashton Eaton, 28; Emma Bunton, 40; Geena Davis, 60.

Happy Birthday: Do your best to ensure that your health and wealth are your top priority. Focus on fitness, nutrition and your relationships with the people you choose to hang out with. Any poor influences you meet along the way should be rejected. The way your year unfolds will be directly linked to the choices you make. Strive for perfection. Your numbers are 8, 13, 16, 22, 29, 37, 45.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Use your energy to show your love and affection for someone special. Try not to let jealousy well up and cause discord. The choice is yours: You can be fun to be with, or you can make a fuss. 2 stars

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Offer your knowledge, assistance and expertise, and you will get something special and unexpected in return. An idea you have will be the perfect solution for a problem you are facing. Share your feelings. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Seek out information that will help you make a better financial or medical choice. Don't limit what you can do by making unrealistic promises. Live within your means and stick to a healthy fitness regimen. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Stick to the plans you make instead of following someone else. It's important to earn respect by showing what you can do on your own. You'll form better relationships if you strive for equality. Set high standards. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): A short trip will result in your learning something new or improving the way you do things. Don't let someone's disgruntled attitude ruin your day or interfere with your goals. Keep your plans a secret. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Explore an idea you have and it will lead to an interesting partnership or opportunity to reunite with someone you have worked with in the past. A domestic matter can be resolved if you take action. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): If you feel the need to make a couple of changes, work on your shortcomings instead of complaining about someone else's. It's best to avoid debates with anyone who will upset you emotionally. Work on your own to achieve the most. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Do what you can to help others. Your practical solutions and your ability to see things from a unique perspective will lead to greater popularity. Don't just make a donation; make your presence count. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Be careful when dealing with unfamiliar people or visiting places you have never been before. Emotional problems will flare up if you don't offer specific details or documentation. Focus on your home and your family. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Your driving force will take everyone by storm. Don't let the unexpected or unwanted changes that take place stop you in your tracks. Follow the path that leads to where you want to go. Detours will disappoint you. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't jump to conclusions. Take your time to listen to what's being said, and you will turn a negative into a positive. Romance is on the rise and will help improve your attitude. Be affectionate, not combative. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Focus on what you can do for others. The end results will help you get what you want in return. Let creative energy lead the way and you will impress onlookers and create new opportunities to present your ideas and concerns. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, caring and imaginative. You are kind and generous.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

7			2			6		1
	5						9	
4				7	8			
		9		4				6
		2				1		
8				9		4		
			1	3				7
	1						8	
6		3			4			5

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/21

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

6	7	9	4	3	2	1	5	8
2	3	1	8	9	5	6	7	4
4	8	5	6	7	1	9	2	3
5	4	2	9	1	8	3	6	7
3	1	7	2	6	4	8	9	5
9	6	8	3	5	7	4	1	2
8	5	4	1	2	9	7	3	6
7	9	6	5	8	3	2	4	1
1	2	3	7	4	6	5	8	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

'SPECTRE' (FILM) **Solution: 8 letters**

O	C	R	A	M	Ⓔ	B	A	U	T	I	S	T	A	T
R	C	R	A	I	G	Ⓥ	N	M	I	A	H	I	N	X
E	H	I	S	E	D	N	Ⓔ	M	R	S	N	E	N	H
T	T	E	X	X	A	M	E	A	I	W	G	N	G	T
S	E	N	N	E	I	F	L	R	H	A	H	I	E	E
A	R	Y	M	R	M	P	R	I	Y	N	B	I	S	R
M	A	R	E	N	H	A	S	N	B	N	W	T	T	C
R	G	O	N	S	H	H	N	L	E	I	R	O	M	E
E	Y	L	I	T	A	E	O	D	L	E	I	Y	P	S
T	A	L	E	W	P	F	L	S	L	D	E	N	C	H
R	C	A	L	Y	E	E	O	L	U	W	A	L	T	Z
A	I	M	E	L	I	N	A	J	C	E	E	V	S	B
U	N	N	D	N	B	R	O	C	C	O	L	I	E	O
Q	O	N	A	O	M	I	E	M	I	S	S	I	O	N
M	M	D	M	O	R	V	A	T	S	E	M	A	J	D

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Agent, Bautista, Bellucci, Blofeld, Bond, Broccoli, Craig, Daniel, Dave, Denbigh, Dench, Ernst, Estrella, Eve, Fiennes, Gareth, Harris, Hinx, James, Judi, Lea, Madeleine, Mallory, Marco, Max, Mean, Mendes, Mexico, Mission, Moneypenny, Monica, Mr. White, Naomie, Quartermaster, Ralph, Rome, Secret, Spy, Stavro, Swann, Tanner, Waltz, Whishaw, Wilson

Yesterday's Answer: Santangelos

To purchase the **WONDERWORD MILLENNIUM SERIES #1 or #2**, order online at: www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 100 puzzles.)

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$6.05 per hour. With 2 years experience
Can speak English, Korean and Chinese

Green Corporation
yum0821@hotmail.com

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College Graduate or some college. Must be knowledgeable in taking down dictation/steno. Must be able to type 60 to 65 words per minute. Computer literate, knowledgeable in Microsoft software such as MS Word, MS Excel, MS Power point and Email. Job certifications on previous employment. Two years experience is also required.

Please send resume to:
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P.O. Box 500438, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands 96950,
United States or call: 670 234-9675

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(01) REGISTERED NURSE
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- Attended a hemodialysis training program and management of hemodialysis inpatient and outpatient care
- At least four years hemodialysis experience and three years as a charge nurse in dialysis
- In-service training with Baxter Phoenix Machine
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- English Language Skills – Proficient in verbal, written, and comprehension
- Must hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing
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WHATZIT Solution: In the doldrums

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Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 5-day run in both print and online editions, for as low as $30 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$30
• 5-Liner	$24	$45

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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Join the MRE team and one of the fastest industries! Help enhance the industry one panel at a time. Excellent pay and benefits.
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Job Description
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The ideal candidate will be experienced in handling a wide range of administrative and executive support related tasks and will be able to work independently with little or no supervision. This person must be exceedingly well organized, flexible and enjoy the administrative challenges of supporting an office of diverse people and positions.

Responsibilities
- Serve as the point person for maintenance, mailing, shopping, supplies, equipment, bills and errands
- Organize and schedule meetings and appointments
- Partner with HR to maintain office policies as necessary
- Organize office operations and procedures
- Coordinate with IT department on all office equipment
- Manage relationships with vendors, service providers, and landlord, ensuring that all items are invoiced and paid on time
- Manage contract and price negotiations with office vendors, service providers and office lease
- Manage office G&A budget, ensure accurate and timely reporting
- Provide general support to visitors

Requirements
- Proven office management, administrative or assistant experience
- Knowledge of office management systems and procedures
- Excellent time management skills and ability to multi-task and prioritize work
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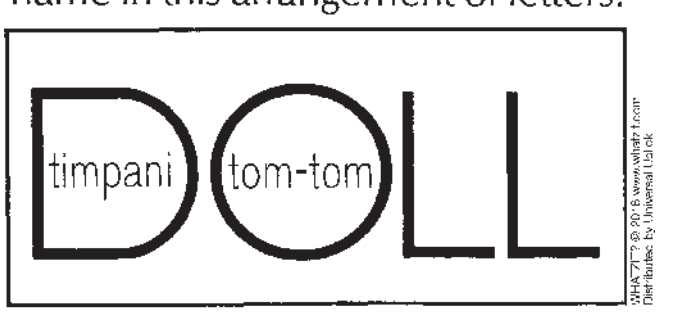

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Serena, Federer march on; Nadal ousted

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Serena Williams has had so much success for such a long time that even in a second-round match she can set a record at the season's first Grand Slam event.

The six-time and defending champion beat No. 90-ranked Hsieh Su-wei 6-1, 6-2 on Wednesday at Rod Laver Arena, an all-time record 79th main draw match at the Australian Open.

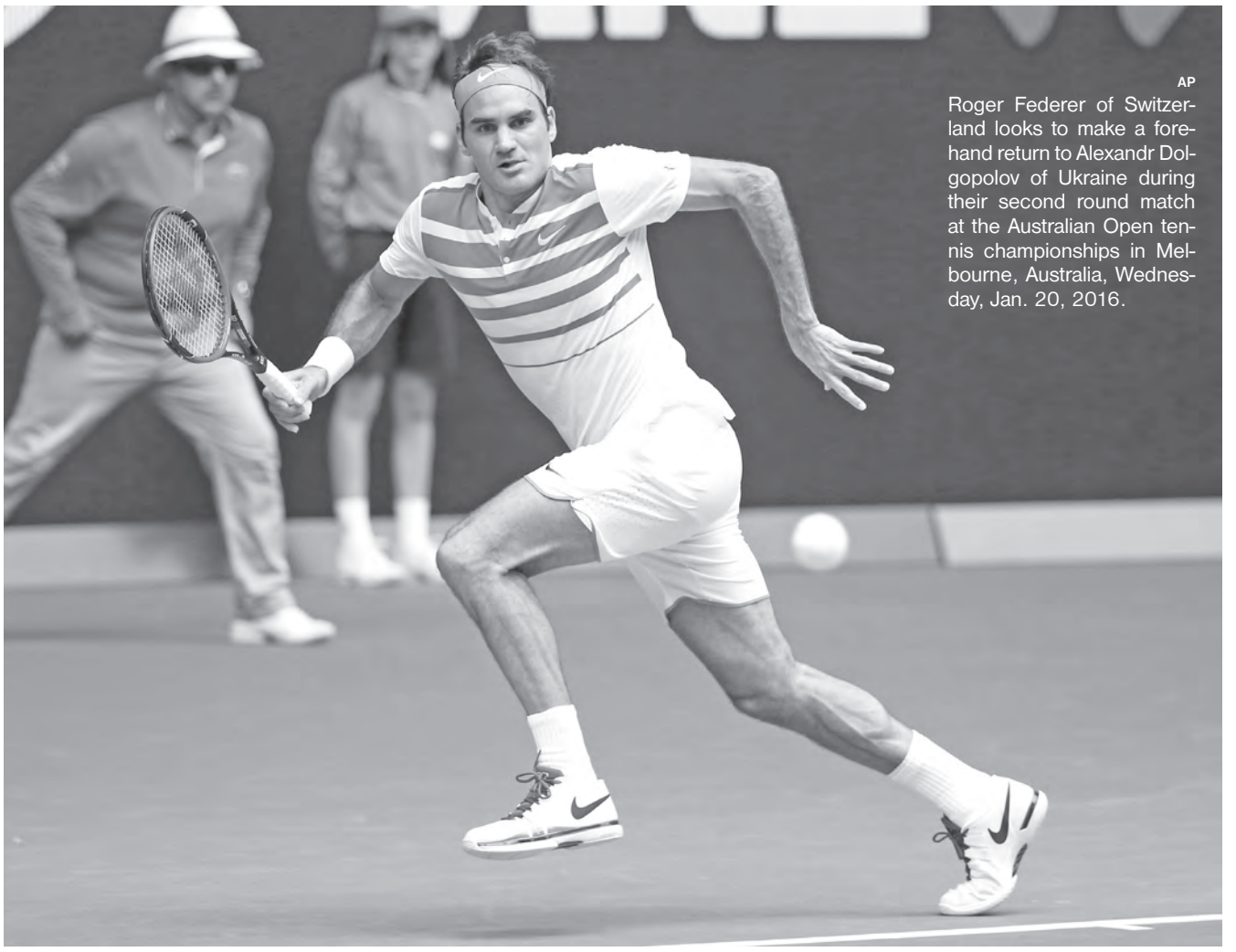
She closed with an ace, her seventh, finishing in precisely an hour.

"It all started here—this is where I played my first Grand Slam right on this court and I'm still going, it's such an honor," said Williams, who has a 70-9 win-loss record at Melbourne Park since her debut in 1998. "I love it every time I come here."

She hit 26 winners, including one around the post that she thought may have been a first for her, at age 34.

"My first one I think," she said. "I was like, 'Yay. Never too late.'"

Williams' next opponent will be 18-year-old Russian Daria Kasatkina, who beat Croatia's Ana Konjuh 6-4, 6-3, and she faces a potential quarterfinal match against Maria Sharapova, which would be a rematch of the 2015 final.



AP

Roger Federer of Switzerland looks to make a forehand return to Alexandr Dolgopolov of Ukraine during their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 20, 2016.

Sharapova reached the third round with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Aliaksandra Sasnovich in the first match completed on day three, when light rain caused an hour-long delay getting started on the outside courts.

Roger Federer extended his streak by reaching the third round for the 17th straight Australian Open, while underdog Fernando Verdasco stunned Rafael Nadal, 7-6, 4-6, 3-6, 7-6, 6-2, in the first round.

Federer, playing his 65th consecutive major, advanced 6-3, 7-5, 6-1 over Alexandr Dolgopolov. He lost in the third round in his first two trips to Melbourne Park in 2000 and '01 and again last year—in between he won the title four times and lost one final during a run of reaching the semifinals or better in 11 straight years.

He didn't face a break point against Dolgopolov, his sometimes practice partner, and said "I thought I served great."

"Very happy, conditions are extremely quick," he said. "I had to serve well and as the match went on I started to feel better and better."

Seventh-seeded Kei Nishikori, the 2014 U.S. Open finalist, advanced with a 6-3, 7-6 (5), 6-3 win over Austin Krajicek, No. 15 David Goffin beat Damir Dzumhur 6-4, 0-6, 6-4, 6-2 and No. 19 Dominic Thiem had a 6-3, 6-1, 6-3 win over Nicolas Almagro.

Sharapova, the 2008 champion and four-time finalist at Melbourne Park, dropped two service games in the first set, including once when serving at 5-1, but was otherwise consistent except for some overhit ground strokes.

"To come back here and play my first match on Rod Laver is always very special as you always get those first little jitters out of the way."

Other seeded players advancing included No. 12 Belinda Bencic, who had a 6-3, 6-3 win over Timea Babos, and No. 13 Roberta Vinci, who beat Irina Falconi 6-2, 6-3.

The 92nd-ranked Kateryna Bondarenko earned one of her biggest wins since returning from retirement after having a baby in 2013, beating two-time major winner and No. 23-seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-1, 7-5.

AFC title may come down to kickers

DENVER (AP)—Antonio Smith says nobody can get into Tom Brady's head. That didn't stop Denver's defensive lineman from trying by labelling New England's quarterback a crybaby.

"I've never seen any quarterback look to the referee right after he gets sacked more than Brady," Smith said with a smile. "Every time he gets sacked he looks at the ref like, `You see him sack me? Was that supposed to happen? He did it a little hard. Please throw a 15-yard penalty on him. Get him fined."

Both teams know the AFC championship won't be decided by potshots -- and maybe not even by the golden arms of Brady and Peyton Manning when they square off for the 17th—and likely final—time Sunday in Denver.

Maybe it'll come down to two of the greatest toes on turf instead.

Especially with Denver sporting the league's stingiest defense and Manning reduced to managing the Broncos' no-longer explosive offense.

New England's Stephen Gostkowski was the NFL's top kicker in 2015, winning his second All-Pro honor after leading the league with 151 points.

Denver's Brandon McManus tied an NFL record by nailing all five of his kicks in tricky crosswinds in Denver's 23-16 win over Pittsburgh in the divisional round.

Sunday's forecast in Denver calls for a clouds and temperatures at kickoff in the lower 40s, dipping into the 30s, which is good news for both Manning and Brady.

Yet ...

Last weekend's game was also supposed to be mild.

"During warmups, we went out there and it was a pretty calm day, a nice, tempered day," McManus said. "We come out seven minutes before kickoff and I see a 30 mph crosswind come in over the Rockies."

With the goal posts swaying wildly from the gusts almost the entire game, McManus converted field goals of 28, 41, 51, 41 and 45 yards, joking it was such a tricky task that he just kept aiming "at the guy holding the beer in the top left corner."

"I think all of them were big," said Demaryius Thomas, who had one of seven dropped passes thanks to the blustery winds. "He kept us in the game with the field goals. Him being able to kick with this wind helped us."

Gostkowski is accustomed to kicking in bad conditions, too. So, if it gets windy Sunday, neither he nor McManus will fret.

"You kind of have to hit a ball to a spot and hopefully the wind takes it," McManus said. "I had that 51-yarder right before halftime. I thought it was going to be easy down the middle, and it barely sneaked in."

Gostkowski's field goals from 40 and 32 yards in the fourth quarter last weekend helped the Patriots stave off Kanas City 27-20. He also nailed a 47-yarder as time expired to send the game to overtime when New England visited Denver on Nov. 29, a game in which McManus missed from the same distance.

While Gostkowski, a 10-year veteran, breezed to his first All-Pro honor since 2008, McManus started out hot, then slumped down the stretch. He made his first 13 kicks, including 57- and 56-yarders in the opener against Baltimore, and was named the AFC's special teams player of the month in October.

His late-season slump included missed kicks in five consecutive games, including one off the left upright in a three-point loss to Oakland. He also shanked one from 45 yards against Cincinnati with no time left but atoned for that miss with a 37-yarder in overtime.

SIDEBAR

Cardinals' running game sputtering

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP)—The Arizona Cardinals' once robust running game has all but vanished in recent weeks. Now the team has to try to rediscover it while facing the punishing defense of the Carolina Panthers.

In last Saturday's 26-20 overtime victory over Green Bay, the Cardinals managed just 40 yards rushing in 19 attempts, an anemic average of 2.1 yards per carry.

David Johnson gained 35 yards in 15 tries, an average of 2.3 per attempt. Arizona's longest running play of the game was eight yards.

"I think they had a good scheme against us from the two weeks before that when we played them, they were ready for us," Johnson said Tuesday after the Cardinals' walk-through practice.

Arizona coach Bruce Arians placed the blame squarely on the offensive line and not on his rookie running back.

"Getting their (behind) kicked up front," Arians said. "It's not anything David is doing. There's just not a lot of holes there and we have to do a better job. It's a tough challenge this week."

When the Cardinals face Carolina in the NFC championship game on Sunday, they will go against a defense that ranked fourth against the run in the regular season, allowing 88.4 yards per game.

Arians said Star Lotulelei and Kawann Short are the best pair of defensive tackles Arizona has seen all season.

"The linebackers are great," Arians said, "but they (the tackles) help make them great."

Lotulelei and Short are great players, Cardinals left guard Mike Iupati said. "They're big, fast, strong."

And they help make linebacker Luke Kuechly the great player he is.

Kuechly, Arians said, has "got great instincts."

"He's really fast," the coach said. "What he really is, he's a great pass defender. People see all the tackles, but they do a great job of keeping him clean to make the tackles,"

The absence of defensive end Jared Allen, who is doubtful for the game due to a broken foot, won't have that much impact, the Cardinals coach said.

"They've got good depth," Arians said. "Mario Addison gave us problems last year and I'm not sure there's a drop off there."

Rest assured that the Arizona offensive linemen will hear a lot this week about their run blocking from Arians and offensive coordinator Harold Goodwin, who specializes in coaching those positions.

Iupati, named to the Pro Bowl for the fourth time in his six NFL seasons, is considered one of the best run blockers in the league.

"We've got to execute better," he said. "We've got to block better, block longer, extend your guys. It's no secret. ... Us O-line guys, we know what we've got to do. We've just got to go out there and open holes for David or whoever's in the backfield and protect the quarterback."

Durant, Westbrook lead Thunder vs Nuggets

DENVER (AP)—While Oklahoma City struggled from beyond the arc Tuesday night, it did enough on the boards to outlast the Denver Nuggets.

Kevin Durant and Russell Westbrook each had double-doubles and the Thunder overcame a cold-shooting night to beat Denver 110-104.

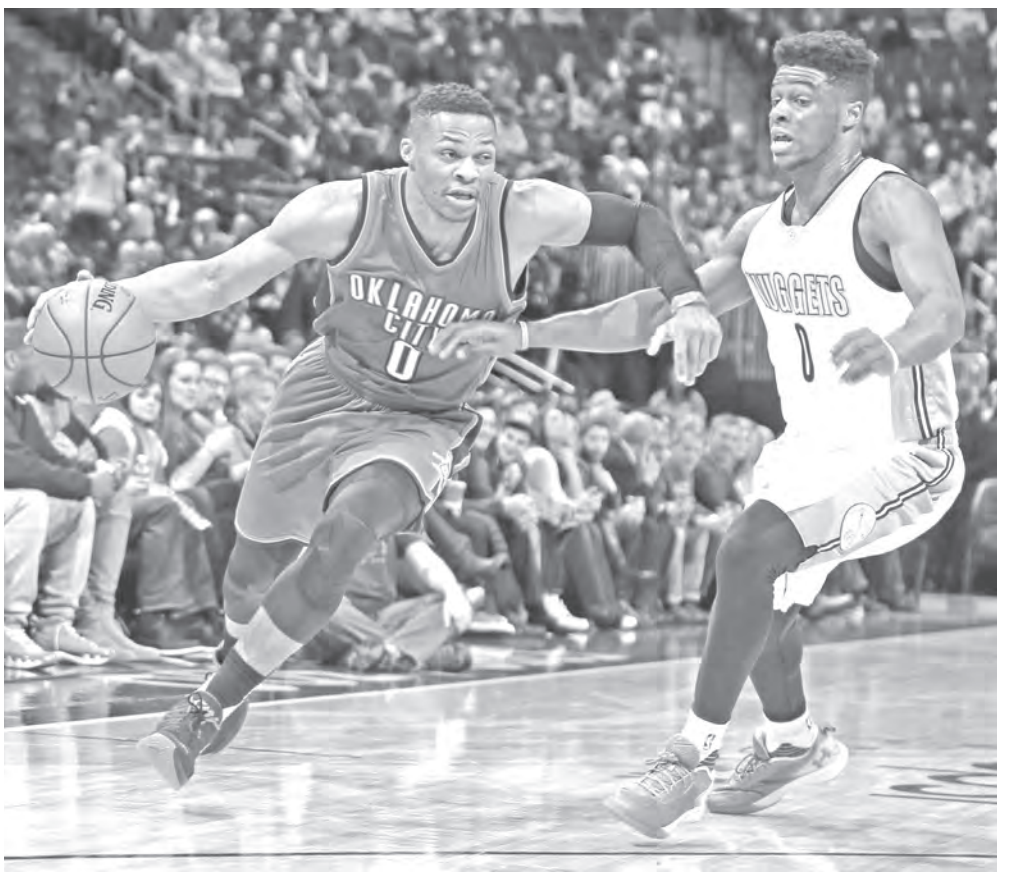
Durant finished with 30 points and 12 rebounds to lead the Thunder, who won their fifth in a row despite hitting just 21 percent from 3-point range.

"We got great shots tonight," Durant said. "Cameron (Payne) missed four wide-open 3s, Dion (Waiters) missed two or three, I missed a couple, so we got great looks tonight. We can live with those."

Westbrook scored 27 points and added 12 assists but fell five rebounds shy of another triple-double. He had two straight coming in and five on the season.

The Thunder have won 20 of 24 and are the only team in the Northwest Division with a winning record. They are 12 games in front of Utah.

It was a former Jazz player that came up big for the Thunder. Enes Kanter had 25 points and eight rebounds, four offensive, to pick up some of the burden from Durant and Westbrook.



AP

Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook, left, drives to the basket past Denver Nuggets guard Emmanuel Mudiay in the first half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2016, in Denver.

"You know that KD and Westbrook are more than likely going to have good games. They're superstars," Denver forward Will Barton said. "But we can't let the other guys do what they did tonight."

Danilo Gallinari scored 27 points but only seven after halftime for the Nuggets. Kenneth Faried had 17 points and 15 rebounds for the Nuggets.

The Nuggets led by as many as 12 in the first half, but Durant and Westbrook were too much in the second half and down the stretch. After Denver cut a 10-point deficit in half with 3:57 left, Westbrook hit a free throw, Durant drained a long 3-pointer and Westbrook dunked to make it 104-95.

Denver cut it to four in the final minute and had a chance to make it a one-possession game, but Westbrook stole a pass in the lane and Kanter hit two free throws with 29.7 seconds left.

Kanter's 25 points were a season high.

"Enes did a really good job tonight," Thunder coach Billy Donovan said. "He was really active on the glass, he got a lot of offensive rebounds, he kept possessions alive, he scored, he did a lot of really good things.

The Nuggets announced before the game they had signed general manager Tim Connelly and assistant general manager Arturas Karnisovas to multi-year contract extensions.

Both executives joined the team in 2013 after the Nuggets had a disappointing first-round exit following a franchise record 57-win season.

Connelly, who also serves as the executive vice president of basketball operations, called himself a "scout with a GM title" and said his "goal was not to be a GM, my goal was to be a paid scout."

Pelicans 114, Timberwolves 99

In New Orleans, Anthony Davis scored 35 points and New Orleans overcame an early 17-point hole to beat Minnesota.

Jrue Holiday scored 19 points and Tyreke Evans added 13 for the Pelicans, who've won three of four and are four games out of the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference with their next six games at home.

Eric Gordon scored 11 points but left the game late in the third quarter after apparently jamming a finger on his right hand.

Andrew Wiggins scored 21 points and Karl-Anthony Towns added 20 points and 13 rebounds for Minnesota, which has lost 10 of 11. Ricky Rubio added 15 points, but the Timberwolves were outscored 63-39 in the second half.

Pacers 97, Suns 94

In Phoenix, Monta Ellis scored 20 points, Paul George had 19 and Indiana beat Phoenix to end a three-game losing streak.

George added eight rebounds and Myles Turner scored 15 points for Indiana.

Devin Booker had a career-high 32 points for the Suns, who lost for the 14th time in 15 games and fifth in a row. Brandon Knight added 21 points.

The Suns fought back to trail 95-92 with 3.8 seconds left after an off-balance 3-pointer by Knight, but the Suns didn't have enough time to complete the comeback.

The Pacers led by 20 points in the third quarter with the Suns struggling all night to make shots. Joe Young's 3 made it 71-51 with 3:08 to go, part of the rookie's 11 points.

Bucks 91, Heat 79

In Miami, Khris Middleton scored 22 points, Greg Monroe added 15 and Milwaukee clamped down defensively on short-handed Miami throughout.

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 14 points for the Bucks, who have now beaten Miami five consecutive times.

Hassan Whiteside scored 23 points and grabbed 18 rebounds for Miami, which has dropped two straight and trailed by at least 22 in each of those games. Chris Bosh scored 23 and Luol Deng added 11 for the Heat.

Dwyane Wade played through shoulder pain and had only two points in 21 minutes.

Miami was without four players, including point guards Goran Dragic and Beno Udrih for the second straight contest. The offense struggled without them, as Miami shot only 36.5 percent.

SIDEBAR

Cavaliers staggered by blowout loss to Warriors

CLEVELAND (AP)—Cleveland's locker room finally opened nearly 25 minutes after a seismic loss to the NBA champions. David Blatt turned right and headed down the hallway.

"Coach on the move," a security officer said into his walkie-talkie.

Blatt stopped in a side room to field questions.

He didn't have all the answers.

Following a 34-point "beat down" (Blatt's term) courtesy of the Golden State Warriors, Blatt, spent his postgame news conference addressing issues surrounding his team—some new, some recurring.

The Cavs were gutted by the Warriors, who put up 70 points in the first half of their first game in Cleveland since winning the title in June and might have dropped 170 had interim coach Luke Walton kept his starters on the floor in the fourth quarter. Cleveland offered zero resistance to the league's top team. The Cavs looked unprepared and unmotivated.

"We never gave ourselves a chance to win," said Blatt, who survived a bumpy first season as Cleveland's coach. "We've got to face up to that and use that as a new starting point to improve ourselves."

Yes, this was just one of 82 games. But this was no ordinary loss.

At one point, the Cavs trailed by 43, the biggest deficit star LeBron James has faced in more than 1,100 career games as a pro. James and his teammates were powerless to stop Stephen Curry & Co., who unleashed their entire offensive cache on a stunned Cleveland team and crowd.

Following the game, James didn't offer excuses. That's not his style -- never has been, never will be. He talked about "getting back to basics" and then pointed out that the Warriors, who have won five straight over Cleveland and are 38-4 overall, are on a different level.

"Their resume speaks for itself," James said. "They got experience and they got high basketball IQ and they got guys who are just sharp mentally at all times. We're not at that point yet."

With owner Dan Gilbert sitting courtside, there were other troubling aspects to Cleveland's loss, among them:

■ Why were the Cavs so flat for perhaps their biggest game to date?

■ What's going on with Kevin Love, again searching to fit in offensively and a defensive liability?

■ And what about J.R. Smith? He arrived less than 50 minutes before the opening tip and then got ejected from another important game for bad behavior.

Blatt accepted partial blame for his team's shockingly lackluster effort, their "lack of mental preparation" and not having "answers at either end." But Blatt can do only so much, and at least against the Warriors, the Cavs seemed disconnected.

They had a healthy Love and Kyrie Irving, but the pair shot a combined 4 of 16 and scored 11 points—5 fewer than Curry poured in during the first quarter. Love struggled on defense, which is nothing new, but he was also a complete nonfactor with the ball, scoring 3 points in 21 minutes.

Olympic golf test event needs players in Rio

HONOLULU (AP)—With golf joining the Olympics for the first time since 1904, the PGA Tour is trying to put together a test event for the new course in Rio de Janeiro.

The tour is having a tough time finding anyone to go because of the crowded 2016 schedule.

"We've got a good list of players who are, quote, interested in coming," PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem said. "But we don't have a long list of players who are committed to coming. That's the case with the guys who are currently playing on the PGA Tour, just because of the schedule, looking ahead to the summer, seeing the compaction. So I don't know."

The test event is planned for March 8, and the tour has lined up a charter flight for its members.

Every sport must have an event at the Olympic venue ahead of the Rio Games. Finchem said if golf can pull together this outing, it will count as the test event.

"We can do that with any combination of players that are being talked to," he said. "Also, I think it's probably most important to get international players. We don't know how it's going to wind up. We've got transportation issues and a sponsor the next week that's watching and saying, `Am I going to lose anybody?"

The World Golf Championship at Doral ends on March 6 and is followed by the Valspar Championship, where Jordan Spieth is the defending champion. His agent, Jay Danzi, said the tour approached Spieth about a trip to Rio, but he didn't want it to interfere with his title defense at Innisbrook.

The European Tour and Asian Tour have a co-sanctioned event in Thailand that week. The LPGA Tour is off, though its best players will be in Singapore on March 6 for the HSBC Women's Champions.

British Open champion Zach Johnson said he was asked. His foundation has a retreat that week. Jimmy Walker and Rickie Fowler also were approached and decided against a flight to Brazil. It's a month before the Masters, with tournaments like the Arnold Palmer Invitational, Dell Match Play and Shell Houston Open leading up to Augusta.

Dee Gordon signs $50 million, 5-year deal with Marlins

MIAMI (AP)—Dee Gordon put his signature on a $50 million, five-year contract with the Miami Marlins as more than a dozen relatives watched from the front row at a news conference Tuesday.

"My family stuck with me through the hard times," Gordon said. "I'm glad they're here for the good times."

The 5-foot-11 Gordon is a frustrated basketball player who switched to baseball in college and became a late bloomer. Last season he led the NL in batting (.333), hits (205) and stolen bases (58), won a Gold Glove at second base and made the All-Star team.

It was his first year in Miami after he was traded by the Dodgers in a seven-player deal.

"I instantly loved the way they treated me here," Gordon said. "Signing an extension was pretty much a no-brainer."

The Marlins described the agreement the same way.

"I'm thrilled to be affirming our long-term commitment to Dee Gordon, not only one of the most dynamic players in baseball, but also an outstanding young man," owner Jeffrey Loria said in a statement. "It's truly incredible and historic what he did in his first season with our ballclub."

Among those attending the news conference was Gordon's father, Tom, who had a 21-year career as a major league pitcher thanks to a succession of one-year contracts.

AP

Miami Marlins second baseman Dee Gordon, center, smiles as he shakes hands with team President David Samson, right, while president of baseball operations Michael Hill, left, looks on during a news conference, Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2016, in Miami.

"This is a wonderful moment for me," said the elder Gordon, a three-time All-Star. "As a parent, you want your kid to do so much better than you ever did."

Dee Gordon, 27, didn't play baseball until 11th grade, and didn't become serious about the sport until three or four years ago, Tom Gordon said.

"He hasn't honed in on all of his skill set yet," the elder Gordon said. "My son is still five years away from understanding what his abilities actually are."

Marlins president of baseball operations Michael Hill agreed Gordon has room to improve—a staggering thought.

"That's what is amazing about who he is," Hill said. "He is still figuring things out. Yes, he has game-changing speed and is a difference-maker offensively and defensively, but his game is evolving."

Gordon avoided salary arbitration with his deal, which includes a $14 million club option for 2021. He joins outfielders Giancarlo Stanton and Christian Yelich among Marlins regulars with long-term contracts.

"We want to build a championship club around our core, and Dee is very much a part of our core," Hill said. "We add him to Yelich and Stanton as pieces of the core signed to long-term deals. That's important for our long-term success."

Gordon injured his thumb at midseason last year and missed 17 games, but still became the first player to lead the NL in average and stolen bases since Jackie Robinson in 1949. He made the All-Star team for the second time, was chosen the Marlins' MVP and led all NL second basemen in fielding percentage.

"It has been a weird, good ride," Gordon said. "That makes it even more special."

January has been a productive month for the Marlins, whose recent $80 million, five-year deal with left-hander Wei-Yin Chen will be announced at a news conference Tuesday. They've also added right-hander Edwin Jackson and backup infielder Chris Johnson.

Hill said the Marlins aren't done shopping, and they hope to add another starting pitcher.

SIDEBAR

Reds retiring Rose's No. 14, inducting him into team HOF

CINCINNATI (AP)—Pete Rose is getting a hall of fame induction -- in the Cincinnati Reds' team hall during a weekend of honors this summer in his hometown -- that will include retiring his No. 14.

The Reds' announcement Tuesday came after MLB commissioner Rob Manfred rejected Rose's application for reinstatement to baseball last month.

Manfred concluded that baseball's career hits leader hasn't shown evidence of "a reconfigured life" and continued to gamble, even while seeking to end the lifetime ban imposed in 1989 for betting on numerous Reds games while playing for and managing the team.

Reds' chief executive Bob Castellini said Manfred approved the plans to honor the 74-year-old Rose. The June 24-26 events also will feature a 40-year reunion of the 1976 world champion Reds, on-field ceremonies and a team hall of fame banquet in which Rose will be awarded the red sports coat its members wear.

"This is an honor, that you can't just believe how you feel," Rose said at a news conference, noting that he grew up a Reds fan and was born a few miles from the Great American Ball Park where he will be honored. He broke into baseball as a Red, played most of his career with them, and also managed the team.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1991 adopted a rule that keeps anyone on the permanently ineligible list off the ballot. Manfred said last month that his decision to continue the MLB ban was separate from any determination on National Hall eligibility. He said while Rose remains banned from working for any major league team or minor league affiliate, he could make ceremonial appearances with the commissioner's approval.

"Pete was told that in the immediate future, he probably is not going to be able to look in terms of Cooperstown," Castellini said Tuesday. "And we certainly wanted to make sure that we picked up that vacuum. The commissioner gave us permission to do that; we couldn't be more pleased that it is now. Now's the time."

PIC

From Page 28

and nailed the basket against the outstretched arms of Islanders' Kelvin Fitial.

Barbo's field goal gave PIC a 75-72 advantage, going into the last 31 seconds of the match. Earlier before PIC's series of possessions, Islander had a chance to grab the upper hand when the former committed another miscue, but Prince Factor was called for a palming violation on his way to the basket.

Islander moved within one after being down by 6 points, 67-73, entering the final three minutes of the match, as it scored 5 straight markers off PIC's errors with Factor making a layup and splitting his charities and Zack Babauta also connecting a fastbreak basket.

Factor then had an opportunity to force a deadlock, but his desperation triple with the 24-second shot clock ticking was too strong and just hit the top of the rim. Barbo got the rebound and was fouled. The PIC big man made his first free throw and missed the second one, while Espinosa had a hand on the ball in the rebound play before losing it to Kelvin Fitial. Fitial went on to pass the leather to J.P. Iglecias on Islander's frontcourt, however the latter's heave hit nothing but air.

PIC regained possession with 1.9 ticks left on the clock and Barbo threw a long pass intended for Espinosa, but Fitial intercepted it and time expired with the Islander center still on the backcourt.

Islander, which won the west division title after a 79-75 triumph over MJD Enterprises in the finals early this month, led PIC in the first half, 42-38, before playing catch up midway in the third period.

The third canto ended with PIC ahead by 6, 61-55, but Islander kept moving closer in the fourth. Islander outgunned PIC in the first six minutes of the final period, 10-5, to cut the deficit to 1, 65-66, before Sean Rabasto knocked in 5 consecutive points off a corner triple that beat the 24-second shot clock and a short jumper in the paint to give PIC more cushion.

However, Islander refused to throw in the towel and mounted another comeback only to fall short in the end after allowing PIC to get multiple possessions in the closing minutes of the match and take the gutsy win.

PIC's semis opponent will be the winner in GMJ/Wholesale-Ask Y U tiff, which will be played tonight.

Blue Haus, which cruised past Maplas in the other quarterfinal game last Tuesday, 94-72, will be paired against the victor of the MJD-Cholos match that will also take place tonight. The qualifiers in the crossover playoffs were the Top 4 finishers in the east and west divisions. GMJ/IKKI ruled the west division after topping Blue Haus in the finals, 81-75.

Blue Haus eased its way into the crossover semifinals after starting to dominate Maplas in the second quarter.

Ahead by only 4 at the end of the first frame, 24-20, Blue Haus played unselfish basketball in the second canto to open a 43-32 advantage at the break.

Blue Haus continued to distribute the wealth in the second half en route to its 22-point winning margin.

Angelo Fernando topscored for Blue Haus with his 26 points, while three of his teammates also finished in double figures and three more combined for 23 markers.

First Game

Blue Haus 94— Fernando 26, Talania 16, Manalo 15, Demapan 13, Esdrelon 8, De Dios 8, Berline 7, Velasco 2.

Maplas 72— Viray 29, Rivera 22, Villanueva 9, Mungcal 7, Salazar 3, Lacson 2.

Scoring by quarters: 24-20, 43-32, 65-53, 94-72.

Second Game

PIC 76— Aranda 22, Rabasto 21, Barbo 14, Quitugia 7, Galloway 6, Abuy 3, Espinosa 3.

Islander 72— Factor 24, Fitial 11, Lauron 8, Babauta 8, Malonzo 7, Iglecias 6, Manibusan 4, Diaz 2, Tenorio 2.

Scoring by quarters: 18-24, 38-42, 61-55, 76-72.

TAN

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12 sports, namely: wrestling, weightlifting, triathlon, swimming, sailing, baseball, va'a (canoe racing), volleyball (beach and indoor), badminton, athletics, golf, and tennis.

The Mini Games will come to Saipan for the first time after the CNMI won the hosting rights in 2014. Vanuatu will host the 2017 competition after beating the Commonwealth in the second round of selection.

CHAN

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most successful players in the World Series of Poker, having topped the prestigious event in 1985, 1987,1988, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2005.

Chan arrived on Saipan last Monday and was impressed with what he saw, especially the beautiful beaches on the island.

"The island reminds me of Hawaii and Virgin Islands. There are a lot of water activities and scenic views and I am sure a lot of people will be happy to visit here. I never imagined this island to be that pretty," said Chan, who had been around the U.S., Australia, Macau, Hong Kong, England, and Paris playing poker.

"Who knows, I may have the Johnny Chan Poker Classic here or maybe an Asian tournament," said Chan, who got the nickname "The Orient Express" after beating 13 of the 16 players in the America's Cup of Poker in Las Vegas in 1982 in a little more than 30 minutes.

The 58-year-old player was originally from Guangzhou, China before his family moved to Phoenix, Arizona in 1968 and to Houston five years later. It is in Houston where he learned to play poker with the customers of their family-owned restaurant and some friends. He was also into American football and athletics while growing up in Houston and now plays bowling and billiards besides joining poker tournaments.

"It takes a lot of experience, practice, guts, and bluffing to play and win poker," said Chan whose success and expertise in poker tournaments around the world earned him cameo roles in various movies and appearances in TV series and allowed him to write an instructional book.

2015 SACAN Basketball League Masters Finals

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

MJD Enterprises' Jun Tabora looks for a teammate to pass the ball to as he faces Armatech's Yosh Gabaldon and Rommel Bartolo during their title match in the masters division of the 2015 San Antonio Community Action Network Basketball League last Saturday at the San Antonio court.

MJD Enterprises' Randy Mungcal, left, and Bobby Sampang, right, battle the rebound against Armatech's George Poquiz, partly hidden.

MJD Enterprises' Jorge De Guzman is hounded by Armatech's Martin Moreno, left, and Bong Malasarte.

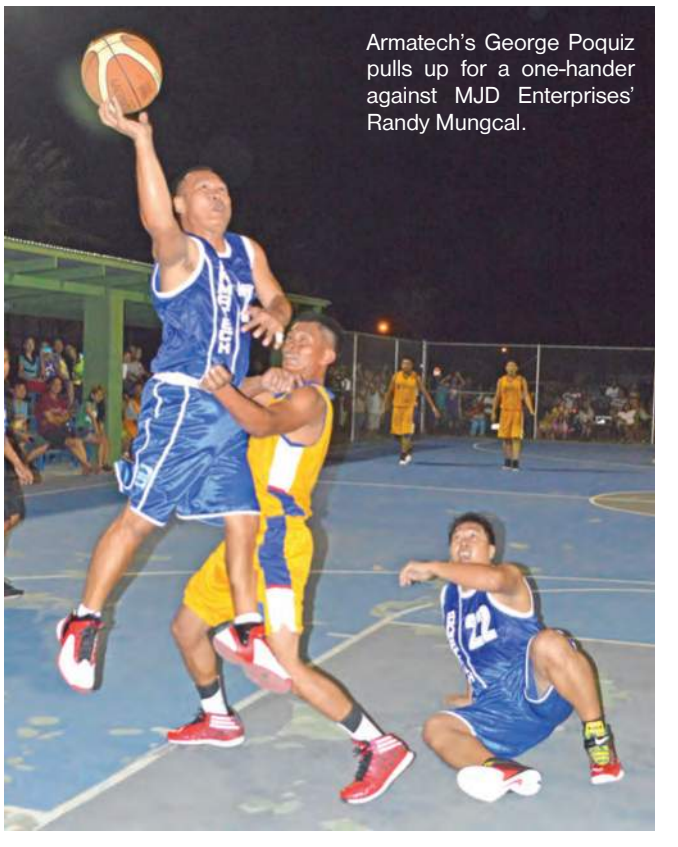
MJD Enterprises' Bobby Vargas, second left, loses the ball against the defense of Armatech's Leo Canedo.

Armatech's Bruce Berline pulls up for a jumper against MJD Enterprises' Jorge De Guzman and Bobby Vargas.

Armatech's Bong Malasarte takes the ball away from MJD Enterprises' Jun Tabora.

Armatech's James Abuy drives past MJD Enterprises defenders.

MJD Enterprises' Alex Ocampo, left, and Jorge De Guzman hound Armatech's George Poquiz.



Armatech's George Poquiz pulls up for a one-hander against MJD Enterprises' Randy Mungcal.

Serena, Federer march on; Nadal ousted

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Durant, Westbrook lead Thunder vs Nuggets

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PIC eliminates Islander

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Pacific Islands Club's Jack Aranda goes up for an off-balance shot against Islanders' J.P. Iglecias during the fourth quarter of their crossover playoff game in the San Antonio caging last Tuesday night at the San Antonio court.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Pacific Islands Club ousted division champion Islander in the crossover playoffs, 76-72, to march into the semifinals of the 2015 San Antonio Community Action Network Basketball League last Tuesday at the San Antonio court.

PIC gained a couple of possessions in the last 1:07 of the fourth quarter and Darwin Barbo turned them into 3 points off an alley-oop basket and a split free throw to eliminate Islander and join first game winner Blue Haus in the Final Four.

Barbo's point-blanked shot at the left baseline off a lob from Mike Espinosa's was PIC's third attempt in less than 40 seconds. The first one was a drive from Espinosa at the left wing and he grabbed the offensive rebound after the miss then kicked the ball out to Jack Aranda at the left key. Aranda unloaded a jumper and faltered, too, while James Abuy picked up another offensive board for PIC. Abuy then swung the ball to Espinosa at the right key with the former temporarily left open for a triple and seemed ready to pull the trigger, but decided at the last minute to pass the leather to Barbo, who was airborne

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Tan, White head Mini Games committees

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Preparations for the CNMI's hosting of the 2021 Pacific Mini Games are moving forward as two sports officials were named to lead key committees.

Tan

White

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association and Northern Marianas Badminton Association president Jerry Tan was elected chair of the 2021 Pacific Mini Games Oversight Committee, while Northern Marianas Sports Association head Michael White was selected to lead the Organizing Committee of the Games.

Tan, who is also the president of Tan Holdings, and White were named to the crucial positions following the organizational meeting of the Oversight Committee last Jan. 13 at the Governor's Office in Capital Hill. Joining Tan on the committee after being appointed by the late Gov. Eloy Inos were special assistant to the Governor for the Office of Management and Budget Virginia Villagomez, Department Public Works secretary James Ada, and Bank of Guam vice president, and manager Merced Tomokane. Completing the group are White, NMSA vice president Kurt Barnes and secretary general Rose Igitol, who were appointed by the Commonwealth's governing sports body, and Pacific Games Council president Vidhya Lakhan.

The Oversight Committee, according to a press release from NMSA, will oversee the good governance, accountability, and transparency of the Organizing Committee for the 2021 Pacific Mini Games, which will be held on Saipan. The group will also receive reports from the Organizing Committee and brief the stakeholders of the Games, including the governor. The Oversight Committee, which was formed in October 2015, will meet again in April this year to get updates about the preparation for the Mini Games.

As for the Organizing Committee, the Oversight Committee has already reviewed and approved the organizational chart of the Mini Games and White said the NMSA board is looking for individuals who will chair various committees.

"The NMSA Board is meeting this evening (yesterday). I intend to ask the Board for permission to solicit expressions of interest from people interested in chairing committees. When these are received, I will suggest committee chairs for the Board's consideration," White said in an email to *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

The 2021 Mini Games, which will be played for two weeks in June, will feature

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Chan: Saipan can host top level poker tourney

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Ten-time World Series of Poker winner Johnny Chan believes Saipan has a shot at hosting top level poker tournaments in the future.

"Anything is possible if you will build a strong foundation," said Chan, who is on island for a vacation after getting an invite from Best Sunshine International.

"You build and they will come," said Chan, adding that he would encourage his friends to come here not only to play, but also to enjoy the beauty of the island.

Chan, who was inducted to the Poker Hall of Fame in 2002, explained that for poker players and other visitors to come to Saipan, there has to be shops, restaurants, resorts, and other facilities that will lure them in.

"I believe Best Sunshine is building a casino resort so that's a good start. One step at a time and in three to five years, you're going to see the results with more people coming in, the economy growing, and the people here getting more job opportunities," said Chan, who is among the

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Johnny Chan gestures during a visit at the Best Sunshine Live yesterday.